

ARCHBISHOP TACHÉ  
ON THE  
AMNESTY QUESTION  
WITH REGARD TO THE  
NORTH WEST DIFFICULTY.

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COMMUNICATED TO "THE TIMES"

ON THE  
6TH, 7TH AND 8TH APRIL, 1874.

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ST. BONIFACE:  
PRINTED BY THE CANADIAN PUBLISHING CO.

1898

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*The* EDITH *and* LORNE PIERCE  
COLLECTION *of* CANADIANA



*Queen's University at Kingston*

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The use of the word amnesty, in speaking of the Red River insurrection, has already given rise to such an amount of prejudice, and excited so much recrimination that it is rather a delicate subject to enter upon. I shall nevertheless undertake to bring it before the public for the information of upright minds.

My desire would have been to avoid taking any ostensible part in the debate of the question, and this explains my silence for four years. Time however, instead of bringing about a solution of the difficulty, has but increased it and things have gone so far that I feel it my duty to interrupt this protracted silence.

To insults and abuse lavished on me personally, insinuations are now added, questioning my sincerity and good faith. The former I have had no difficulty in treating with silent contempt, as regards the latter, I cannot consent to accept any suspicion.

Had my advice or suggestions been taken into consideration, the transfer of the Northwest to Canada would have taken place without either trouble or resistance, and it would not have been necessary to call for my intervention.

After having failed in my efforts to induce the competent authorities to act in such a way as to prevent all complications, yet my efforts did prove successful in bringing a peaceable and satisfactory solution of the difficulties apprehended and foretold.

The promise of amnesty has been one of the means employed to secure this happy result. My duty towards those who relied on my word is now to make known what guarantees I gave them, and my duty towards myself

is to make known on what grounds I made such a promise, and on what grounds I continue to believe and to assert that amnesty has not only been offered, but has, in fact, been virtually granted.

In my estimation amnesty has long since ceased to be an open question ; public good faith being engaged and national honor at stake.

I find the proof of my assertion in authentic documents and writings, in official and semi-official promises and acts, and I invoke for its support the irresistible logic of facts.

The following pages are not an appeal to passions nor even to feelings. I merely put myself forward as an historian, and leave to sensible men to deduce the practical consequences of what I advance. Hence I write in a quiet manner, carefully avoiding anything of a nature to create prejudice or increase excitement.

Confidential or secret communications being considered by me as sacred, I need not say that I shall not betray them. Without running the risk of being indiscreet, I have sufficient proof that *the amnesty is no longer an open question*, either for the Imperial or the Federal authorities, and still less for those in power in the Province of Manitoba.

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## I

# The Imperial Authorities and the Amnesty.

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Invited by the Canadian Government I left Rome in January, 1870, and on the 10th February I had the honor to be introduced to the Right Honorable Sir John Young, now Lord Lisgar, and at that time Governor General of Canada.

His Excellency not only afforded me a courteous reception, but bestowed upon me the marks of unequivocal confidence. He acquainted me with his own views and those of the Imperial Government relative to the Red River difficulties. While affirming the force of the law and the determination of the British Cabinet to maintain its supremacy in the Northwest Territory, the Governor General admitted that faults had been committed through Canadian agency at the Red River; that precisely on that account, the insurgents were entitled to the clemency of Our Gracious Sovereign, and that the past would be easily overlooked, provided they would accept the decision of Her Majesty as to the fact and the conditions of their entry into the Confederation. His Excellency expressed the desire that, on my arrival at Fort Garry, I would endeavor to inspire confidence in the dissatisfied parties, not only by giving them assurance that they would be submitted to no annoyance for the past; but, moreover, if they would bring their complaints to him, as the immediate representative of Her Majesty, they would be kindly and generously treated.

On the eve of my departure from Ottawa, His Excellency honored me with the following letter:—

OTTAWA, FEBRUARY 16, 1870.

“MY DEAR LORD BISHOP:

“I am anxious to express to you, before you set out, the deep sense of obligation which I feel is due to you for giving up your residence at Rome, leaving the great and interesting affairs in which you were engaged there, and undertaking at this inclement season the long voyage across the Atlantic, and long journey across this continent for the purpose of rendering service to Her Majesty's Government, and engaging in a mission in the cause of peace and civilization.

“Lord Granville was anxious to avail of your valuable assistance from the outset, and I am heartily glad that you have proved willing to afford it so promptly and generously.

“ You are fully in possession of the views of my Government, and the Imperial Government, as I informed you, is earnest in the desire to see the Northwest Territory united to the Dominion on equitable conditions.

“ I need not attempt to furnish you with any instruction for your guidance beyond those contained in the telegraphic message sent me by Lord Granville on the part of the British Cabinet, in the proclamation which I drew up in accordance with that message, and in the letters which I addressed to Governor McTavish, your Vicar General, and Mr. Smith.

“ In this last note, ‘ All who have complaints to make,’ or wish to express, are called upon to address themselves to me, as Her Majesty’s representative, and you may state with the utmost confidence that the Imperial Government has no intention of acting otherwise than in perfect good faith towards the inhabitants of the Northwest. The people may rely that respect and attention will be extended to the different religious persuasions; that title to every description of property will be carefully guarded, and that all the franchises which have subsisted, or which the people may prove themselves qualified to exercise, shall be duly continued and liberally conferred.

“ In declaring the desire and determination of Her Majesty’s Cabinet, you may safely use the terms of the ancient formula, ‘ Right shall be done in all cases.’

“ I wish you, my Lord Dear Bishop, a safe journey and success in your benevolent mission.

“ Believe me, with all respect,

“ Faithfully Yours,

“ (Signed),                      JOHN YOUNG.”

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The above letter coming from the representative of Our Gracious Sovereign confirms the opinion already verbally expressed and is strengthened by the assurance that Lord Granville was “ anxious to avail of my assistance.” The same letter pointed out, for my guidance, the message sent by the Imperial Government, His Excellency’s Proclamation of the 6th of December, 1869, as well as letters he had written to the gentlemen already officially employed in the pacification of the people of Red River.

These documents naturally inspire the “ utmost confidence; ” moreover, having been confided to me without either restriction or condition they had their meaning, not only for the day they were handed to me, but also should retain the same weight until I was enabled to communicate them to those they concerned.

Had the events previous to my arrival at Fort Garry, altered the dispositions expressed in the same documents, the authorities who had entrusted them to me, were bound in justice to warn me of the change of their intentions, in order to redeem their word and mine with the people to whom I had to convey this message of “ peace and conciliation.”



Now, more than four years have elapsed since these events have occurred, and nothing has come to my knowledge, tending to contradict the word given by Her Majesty's representative speaking officially and solemnly in a proclamation drawn up in accordance with the message received direct from the Colonial Office, Downing street.

Let us examine the documents referred to, at least in as much as they denote clemency and define the manner of treating the insurgents. The first to which my attention was called is the following telegram sent by Lord Granville to Sir John Young, dated the 25th November, 1869 :

“ The Queen has learned with regret and surprise that certain misguided men have joined together to resist the entry of Her Lieutenant Governor into Her Majesty's possessions in Red River.

“ The Queen does not distrust Her subjects loyalty in those settlements, and must ascribe their opposition to a change plainly for their advantage, to misrepresentation or misunderstanding. She relies upon your Government for taking every care to explain where there is a misunderstanding, and to ascertain the wants, and conciliate the good will of all the settlers of the Red River. But at the same time, she authorizes you to tell them that she views with displeasure and sorrow their lawless and unreasonable proceedings, and that she expects that if they have any wish to express or complaints to make, they will address themselves to the Governor of the Dominion of Canada, of which in a few days they will form a part.

“ The Queen relies upon her representative being always ready on the one hand to give redress to well founded grievances, and on the other, to repress with the authority with which she has entrusted him, any unlawful disturbance.”

It is obvious that Her Majesty's Government desires in the first place that “ every care be taken to explain where there is a misunderstanding and conciliate the good will of the settlers of Red River.” All this denotes benevolence ; it is more than the pardon of past offences. It is the offer to meet the wishes of the mal-contented. His Lordship goes so far as to say : “ If they have any wish to express or complaints to make, they will address themselves to the Governor of the Dominion of Canada.”

Still greater stress is given to the expression of this favorable disposition in another message of Lord Granville, notwithstanding the knowledge that the insurrectional movement has assumed greater proportions, that arrests had been made, that prisoners were kept at Fort Garry, and that the insurgents mastered the position. In this emergency the noble Lord, Minister for the Colonies, does not hesitate to say on the 8th of January, 1870 :—“ I observe with great satisfaction the anxiety manifested by the Canadian Government to avoid any collision with the insurgents in the Red River settlement, and to exhaust all means of explanation and conciliation before having recourse to force.”

This language, that of a member of the British Cabinet, would be a cause of astonishment elsewhere than in England, but it does not belong to Canadians to complain of the views of the Mother Land, especially when

the Minister for the Colonies, clearly affirms that the Cabinet of Ottawa had given occasion to (the) 'outburst.' His despatch of the 30th November, 1869, reads as follows :

" The Canadian Government in anticipation of the transfer, now agreed on by all parties, undertook certain operations in respect of land, subject in the first instance to a faint protest from the company, and directed the future Lieutenant Governor to enter the territory. The result unfortunately, has not met the expectations of the Colonial Government.

" Mr. McDougall was met, it appears, by armed resistance, and the disturbances caused by his presence seem to have resulted in the plunder of the Company's stores and the occupation of Fort Garry by the insurgent portion of the population,

" But the Canadian Government having by this measure given an occasion to an outburst of violence in a territory, which they have engaged to take over, now appear to claim the right of postponing indefinitely the completion of their engagements to the Company, and of imposing on Her Majesty's Government the responsibility of putting down the resistance which has thus arisen."

This assertion already tending to lessen the responsibility of the dissatisfied parties is still more strongly expressed in the following from Earl Granville to the Right Honorable Sir John Young, dated 26th January, 1870.

....." I much more seriously regret the proclamation put forth by Mr. McDougall, and the commission issued by him to Colonel Dennis. The proclamation recited that Her Majesty has transferred Rupert's Land to Canada, which has not been done; assumes the authority of Lieutenant Governor, which did not legally belong to him, and purported to extinguish the powers belonging to Mr. McTavish, who is in fact the only legal Governor of the territory. A subsequent commission empowered Colonel Dennis to arm those adhering to him, to attack, arrest, disarm, and disperse armed men disturbing the public peace, and to assault, fire upon, and break into houses in which these armed men were to be found. If Colonel Dennis had acted on this the most disastrous consequences might have ensued. As it is, Governor McTavish must suppose his authority extinguished, none other being substituted for it, and the discovery that the statements made in the proclamation are unfounded in fact, must detract from the weight of any subsequent proclamations. Those proceedings do not render Her Majesty's Government less desirous of the restoration of tranquility under the authority of the Dominion; but they have certainly enhanced the responsibility of the Canadian Government."

The above despatches, although not making mention of amnesty in favor of the insurgents, denote that they have a certain right to it, as they charge the Canadian Government and its agents with hasty, illegal and criminal acts; the extinction of the powers of Governor McTavish, and the distrust that such acts would inspire.

I was made acquainted with the said despatches in order to duly value the tendencies of the Imperial Government, and thereby be better enabled to restore confidence to the people of Red River, and determine their

acceptance of the proposed change without fear for the past or uneasiness for the future.

The Governor General after having satisfied me as to the intention of the British Cabinet, drew my attention to his own proclamation of the 6th December, 1869. The following is an exact copy of the document given to me by command of His Excellency :

## PROCLAMATION.

V. R.

“ By His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir John Young, Baronet, a Member of Her Majesty’s Most Honorable Privy Council, Knight Grand Cross of Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Knight of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St George, Governor General of Canada.

“ To all and every the loyal subject of Her Majesty the Queen, and to all to whom these presents shall come,—GREETING :

“ The Queen has charged me, as her representative, to inform you that certain misguided persons in her settlements on the Red River, have banded themselves together to oppose by force the entry into her Northwestern Territories of the officer selected to administer, in her name, the Government, when the Territories are united to the Dominion of Canada, under the authority of the late Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom ; and that those parties have also forcibly, and with violence, prevented others of her loyal subjects from ingress into the country.

“ Her Majesty feels assured that she may rely upon the loyalty of her subjects in the Northwest, and believes those men who have thus illegally joined together have done so from some misrepresentation.

“ The Queen is convinced that in sanctioning the Union of the Northwest Territories with Canada, she is promoting the best interests of the residents, and at the same time strengthening and consolidating her North American possessions as part of the British Empire. You may judge then of the sorrow and displeasure with which the Queen views the unreasonable and lawless proceedings which have occurred.

“ Her Majesty commands me to state to you, that she will always be ready through me, as her representative, to redress all well founded grievances, and any complaints that may be made, or desires that may be expressed to me as Governor General. At the same time she has charged me to exercise all powers and authority with which she has instructed me in the support of order, and the suppression of unlawful disturbances.

“ By Her Majesty’s authority I do therefore assure you that on the union with Canada, all your civil and religious rights and privileges will be respected, your properties secured to you, and that your country will be governed, as in the past, under British laws, and in the spirit of British justice.

“ I do, further under her authority, entrust and command those of you who are still assembled and banded together, in defence of law, peaceably

to disperse and return to your homes, under the penalties of the law in case of disobedience.

“ And, I do lastly inform you, that in case of your immediate and peaceable obedience and dispersion, I shall order that no legal proceedings be taken against any parties implicated in these unfortunate breaches of the law.

“ Given under my hand and Seal at Arms at Ottawa, this sixth day of December, in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine, and in the thirty-second year of Her Majesty's reign.

“ By command,



“ (Signed),

JOHN YOUNG.

“ (Signed),

H. L. LANGEVIN,  
“ Secretary of State.”

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Among other things, this proclamation contains two paragraphs, the one inviting the dissatisfied parties to “address themselves” to His Excellency, the other promising, in case of submission, “to give orders that no legal proceedings will be taken against any” of them.

Furnished with these documents, which I know to be genuine, brought forth with the utmost good faith, and necessarily implying their effect, being the echo of Royal tidings, I immediately set out.

Notwithstanding all possible diligence, the difficulty of the route, and the absence of any speedy mode of conveyance through the plains, prevented my reaching St. Boniface before the 9th of March, five days after the execution of Thomas Scott.

It was only after my arrival that I ascertained all the danger of the situation. I studied it to the best of my judgment. I conferred with the persons mentioned in the Governor General's letter, and together we came to a perfect understanding as to the gravity of events and the means of averting misfortunes incomparably greater than those that had already happened.

Circumstances did not seem to dictate a different course of action than that suggested in England and advised anew by the Governor General, as the first remedies to evil.

I produced His Excellency's proclamation, inviting a delegation and promising an amnesty, I assured the insurgents and their leaders that their just reclamations would be listened to, and I shewed them the signature of the representative of Our Gracious Sovereign, promising to give order that no legal proceedings would “be taken against any” of them.

As foretold by Lord Granville the false proclamation issued by Hon. W. McDougall had the effect to “detract from the weight of any subsequent proclamations.” Then *we* came forth as guarantee of the genuineness of the one that had been handed to me, and affirmed *upon my honor* that it would be fully executed; and, that all, without distinction would be benefitted by the promise made to them.

In a word, guided by my verbal and written instructions, and considering myself as the Governor General himself had said “fully in posses-

sion of the views of " the representative of Her Majesty, I transmitted the pledge of amnesty entrusted to me.

Have I done wrong ? Have I frustrated the expectations of the representative of our beloved Sovereign ? Have I made a rash and indiscreet promise ? No. Since after my explanations the honourable Secretary of State wrote to me on the 27th May, 1870, as follows :—

" MY LORD,—I..... am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General to express his sympathy in your anxieties and his warm acknowledgments of your exertion in the cause of peace and moderation."

I have besides, other direct and official proofs that I was not mistaken in believing that the events that had occurred while I was on the way between Ottawa and Fort Garry had not modified the views of the Imperial Government.

The desire to open negotiations with the delegates was fully realized. The delegates were not only listened to, but were received officially ; meanwhile, bringing forth as condition *sine qua non* the 19th clause of their instructions requiring a full and complete amnesty.

It is true that on their arrival at Ottawa, two of the three delegates were arrested, but this merely turned to prove that the sad event of the 4th of March had not changed the policy of the Imperial Government, as it clearly appears in the following despatches interchanged between Earl Granville and Sir John Young.

On the 17th March, Lord Granville had sent the following telegraphic message : " Let me know by telegram when you know delegates have started from Fort Garry."

On the 4th of April, the following telegram was sent by Sir John Young : " Smith came here on Saturday from Fort Garry with bad news. A Canadian called Scott—was by Riel's orders tried by court martial and shot, with the view it is supposed of compromising Riel's followers before Taché had arrived. They say the delegates are coming, but it is quite clear Riel will yield to nothing but force. Things now look, I think very bad."

On the 7th April, Sir John Young again, " Last of the delegates is expected at St. Paul on Thursday, the 14th, the others arrived there to-day, and may reach Ottawa on Saturday, the 9th."

Notwithstanding " the bad news and apprehensions expressed by Sir John Young in his despatch of the 4th April, on the 9th of the same month Lord Granville telegraphed " Let me know as soon as you can by telegram, result of negotiations with Red River delegates."

Having learned the arrest of the delegates, Lord Granville telegraphed on the 18th April, " Was arrest of delegates authorized by the Canadian Government ? Send full information by telegram."

To this Sir John Young replied on the following day, " Arrest of delegates was not authorized by the Canadian Government."

The uneasiness felt by Lord Granville, relative to the arrest of the delegates, proves how much His Lordship deplored the odious proceeding, and that the Revd. Mr. Ritchot had comprehended the views of the Imperial Government when addressing the following energetic protest to Sir John Young :—



“ To His Excellency Sir JOHN YOUNG,  
“ Governor General of Canada.

“ Excellency,

“ I, at this moment, address myself directly to you, the representative of the Sovereign and the guardian of British honor in this country for to ask you to kindly order to respect in my person, the privilege belonging to a parliamenteer, to be exempt from all hostilities and all molestations until return to safe quarters. I am here in company with Judge Black and Mr. Scott, as representative of the North West Territory, invited by Your Excellency's proclamation, and on the assurances given by the Commissioners of Your Excellency's Government, especially by Mr. Smith and Colonel de Salaberry.

“ Mr. Scott and I came to Ottawa in company with Colonel de Salaberry, and have been at the frontier met by a Magistrate who offered us, as the actual circumstances required, the safe conduct of his escort.

“ Notwithstanding the inviolability with which we are invested, character respected at all times and by all nations, independent of all circumstances and complications, we are submitted to pursuits and indignities which the Government of Your Excellency no doubt deplore, but which do not seem to be coming to an end.

“ I am accused of participation in the death of a man. Even if the thing were as true as it is radically false, it would not alter my position as Parliamenteer invited and accepted by the Government of Your Excellency, for I came here trusting to a sacred pledge and under the guardianship of British and Canadian honor.

“ For my own satisfaction, I declare to Your Excellency before God and before men, that I have not in any way contributed to the death of a man. I know nothing more of the fact of the death of an individual called Scott (if it occurred) than what every one knows or thinks to know. At this very moment, I would be unable to give the least evidence in this affair, but, I repeat this does not interfere with my position as Parliamenteer, which renders me inviolable, and by which I am free from all civil or criminal jurisdiction.

“ Relying on public honor and on the honourableness of Your Excellency and of those who with Your Excellency are the guardians thereof, I demand that an end be put to the persecutions and insults to which we are submitted.

“ I postponed making this demand in order to not increase actual difficulties ; but I feel that the dignity of my mission would suffer by a longer delay.

“ Accept, Excellency, the assurance of the respect with which,

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Your humble and obedient servant,

“ (Signed), J. N. RITCHOT.”

Ottawa, 20th April, 1870.

The Private Secretary of His Excellency acknowledged receipt of the above document by the following :—

“ RIDEAU HALL, APRIL 22ND, 1870.

“ SIR,—I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General, to acknowledge the receipt of your communication calling for the protection of His Excellency, and I have the honor to inform you that His Excellency has transmitted it to his council to be taken into consideration as soon as possible.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ (Signed), F. TURVILLE.”

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The delegates were then set at liberty. The deliberations began. On the 3rd of May, Sir John Yonng sent the following telegram : “ Negotiations with the delegates closed satisfactorily.”

On the 18th of the same month the Minister for the Colonies addressed the following letter to Sir John Young :—

DOWNING STREET, 18TH MAY, 1870.

SIR,—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your despatches Nos 85 and 87 of the 25th and 29th April last, enclosing documents connected with the recent disturbances in the Red River territory. I am glad to learn that the proceedings adopted against the Rev. Mr. Ritchot and Mr. Scott were promptly disposed of, and had not been renewed ; and I take this opportunity of expressing the satisfaction with which I have learned from your telegram of the 3rd inst., that the Canadian Government and the delegates have come to an understanding as to the terms on which the settlements on the Red River should be admitted into the Dominion. In giving an account of what has passed to the House of Lords, I had much pleasure in acknowledging publicly the singular judgment, decision and conciliation with which your Government has acted since this unfortunate outbreak.

I have, etc.,

(Signed), GRANVILLE.

Right Honorable Sir John Young, G. C. B. G. C. M. G.

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What does all this mean when it is beyond doubt that the “ Delegates of the North West ” were the representatives authorised and accredited by the Provisional Government ? All this merely denotes that Lord Granville comprehended the situation and that heedless of all the excitement then

prevailing in Canada, his whole anxiety was to secure the prosperity of the Confederation, and above all to guard the honor of the Crown, pledged by its representative. In fact the condition dictated in the name of Her Majesty having being accepted, it became necessary on the other hand to fulfill the promise made in her name. All this means that whatsoever appellation be given to the Red River difficulties, all that occurred in connection therewith from October, 1869, until May, 1870, was pardoned by amnesty, and that using her royal prerogative, our beloved Sovereign wished the past to be forgotten and merely aimed at the future prosperity of the new Province of Manitoba.

Sir John Young and Sir Clinton Murdoch endorsing the views of the Minister for the Colonies gave the delegates the most positive assurances of the grant of an amnesty. This has been often repeated by Messrs. Ritchot and Scott since their return from Ottawa.

In February, 1872, the said delegates drew up and signed a petition to Her Majesty stating the same undeniable fact.

Below is furnished on the subject the sworn affidavit given by Father Ritchot before Narcisse Valois, Esquire, Justice of Peace for Montreal, and dated 19th November, 1873.

DOMINION OF CANADA, }  
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC, }  
District of Montreal. }

I, the undersigned, Noël Joseph Ritchot, Parish Priest of St. Norbert, County of Provencher, Province of Manitoba, being now in the City of Montreal, Province of Quebec, after having been duly sworn on the Holy Gospel, declare and say :

That the President of the Provisional Government of Assiniboia, by an Order in Council dated 22nd March, 1870, delegated to Ottawa, the Rev. N. J. Ritchot, John Black, Esq., and Alfred Scott, Esq., to carry to Ottawa the bill of rights claimed by the people of Assiniboia, and to negotiate there the conditions on which the same people would agree to join in the Canadian Confederation.

That the said delegates thus empowered proceeded to Ottawa, were received by the Government in the said capacity of delegates, and transacted with Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier, the two ministers authorized to that effect by their Government.

That on the 26th April, 1870, the negotiations were opened by the taking into consideration of the Bill of Rights brought by the delegates, and on which the Bill of Manitoba was framed.

That, besides the Bill of Manitoba, in accordance with the 19th clause of the Bill of Rights, the delegates required as condition *sine qua non* of any agreement, a general amnesty for all that had been done or authorized by the Provisional Government.

That the Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George E. Cartier, after stating that the Government of Ottawa had no power to grant an amnesty, declared that they were in a position to assure the delegates that the intention of Her Majesty was to grant it. That they would guarantee



its promulgation, and that it would, in fact, be proclaimed immediately after the passage of the Bill of Manitoba.

That on the 3rd of May, 1870, before closing the negotiations, the Governor General and Sir Clinton Murdoch assured the delegates in the name of Her Majesty that the amnesty would be granted. His Excellency referred to his own proclamation of the month of December previous, as a proof of the intention of Her Majesty, and Sir Clinton Murdoch added, among other assertions :

That Her Majesty would willingly expunge the deeds in question in order to restore tranquility in that country. The delegates objecting that they had no written document to show to the people of the Red River the said representatives of Her Majesty repeatedly assured the delegates that the question would suffer no difficulty, and that the amnesty would surely be granted.

The delegates accepted this promise of honor and the Governor General, Sir John Young, telegraphed to Lord Granville "Negotiations with the delegates closed satisfactorily."

That on the 19th of the same month of May the Governor General of Canada, at his residence, in presence of Sir George E. Cartier, renewed to the delegates the assurance that the amnesty would be undoubtedly granted. Still more, that the said amnesty would reach Manitoba before the arrival of the Lieutenant Governor of the Province, and that while awaiting its publication, he, the Governor General, would give orders that no annoyance would result to any one of those implicated in the troubles of 1869 and 1870.

I have signed after reading had been done.

(Signed), NOEL J. RITCHOT.

Sworn before me on the nineteenth day of November, 1873, at Montreal.

(Signed), NAR. VALOIS, J. P.

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Such a declaration sworn to by a person of the position and character of Rev. N. J. Ritchot should suffice alone, and it is easily understood that it can but strengthen my conviction when added to so many other evidences, that the amnesty has been promised in the name of Her Majesty.

The very fact of negotiating with the "Delegates of the North West" with the approbation of the Imperial Government, demonstrates that the proclamation of the Governor General, which had been handed to me by command of His Excellency on the 17th February, 1870, had obtained its full effect in England, and ought to be sufficient throughout the Dominion to protect all and every one of those connected with the Red River difficulties, whatsoever may be their names or the share of responsibility they have assumed.

The proclamation of Sir John Young having been neither revoked nor modified, held good when I arrived at Fort Garry and continued so when I

banded it to those it concerned. This document has lost nothing of its weight since, if I may judge by the words of the Governor General himself.

In an interview with His Excellency at Niagara, on the 23rd of July, 1870, I expressed the desire to have a renewed declaration of amnesty. The Governor General pointing to his proclamation, exclaimed: "Here is my proclamation, it covers the whole case." As I insisted on having something more explicit, owing to the doubts expressed by some parties concerning the same proclamation, the Governor General requested me to write to him on the subject. I did so, and the following written at Hamilton was addressed to His Excellency, at Niagara, and merely intended to obtain a renewed and more explicit promulgation of amnesty, for the satisfaction of those whom I had mentioned to the Governor General, and who doubted the meaning of his first proclamation, though it was quite sufficient for me; as I was perfectly satisfied that the amnesty had been positively promised.

HAMILTON, 23RD JULY, 1870.

To His Excellency Sir JOHN YOUNG,

Governor General of the Dominion of Canada.

May it please Your Excellency to allow me to communicate the following observations relative to the Red River difficulties:—

1st. I desire to resent the odious calumnies lavished on me in certain newspapers. I protest before God and before men against those accusations. The part I took in the Red River troubles consists merely in the pain they caused me; in the efforts made to the best of my judgment, to quell them; and in the desire to see the whole concur to consolidate the noble institutions by which we are governed by forming a close and indissoluble union between Canada, the land of my birth, and the North West, that of my adoption.

2nd. I regret as much as any one, the deplorable deeds perpetrated: nevertheless, I dare affirm that it is impossible to form an impartial judgment of the same, without being acquainted with all the circumstances that have given rise to them, and such information it is very difficult for outsiders to obtain. Three men lost their lives during the troubles; the first I may say accidentally, as Parisien who shot him was not sound in mind. Parisien himself, arrested before the sad event by the so called loyal party, was afterwards killed by them, or rather left for dead and in fact died in consequence of the horrible treatment they had inflicted on him. No mention is made of the death of these two men; but, instead, some of those who most largely contributed to the death of the latter, thinking to thereby display their loyalty loudly called to revenge the last victim, the unfortunate Thomas Scott. Any one, acquainted with the events, is less astonished at the death of Scott, than at the fact of there being but one victim in the insurgent quarters. This fact clearly proves that the armed party was neither blood-thirsty nor actuated by a revengeful spirit.

3rd. I have no desire to accuse any one, but if punishment is to be inflicted on the most guilty and rebellious, it might be deserved by some of those who are exalted as the champions of loyalty, duty and honor.

4th. If deplorable acts can have an atonement, I find it in the very conduct of the leaders of the insurrectional movement of Red River. The movement was never intended to be against allegiance to Great Britain : the British flag was never taken down, and the Fenian banner was never hoisted, notwithstanding the assertion of the contrary in newspapers.

The Fenians, as a body, only met refusal or silence when they offered their co-operation. Outside of the Fenian Association, the Provisional Government of Red River has repudiated offers that might have seduced its members, had the sentiment of allegiance not prevailed, sums of money amounting to more than four millions of dollars (\$4,000,000), men and arms had been offered, and the whole was refused by those "rebels" whom it is proposed to get hanged by the expedition, after they had refused the help offered to determine them to attack it.

5th. The last and most important of the observations I take the liberty to lay before Your Excellency, is relative to the amnesty in favor of those who have taken a part in the illegal and criminal acts which in one way or another were committed during the painful period of the Red River disturbances. Notwithstanding the accusations thrown against me, I venture to say that I have largely contributed to the pacification of Red River, and I have thereby averted complications that would have entailed the most deplorable results. In this I have only accomplished my duty as a citizen and pastor ; and I would leave the fact unmentioned were it not to throw more light on what I have to add. The promise of an amnesty has largely contributed to obtain the result secured ; had I not been convinced myself that an amnesty would be granted ; had I not brought the people to partake of my conviction, the mission entrusted to me by the Government of Your Excellency would certainly not be crowned with the success obtained. Guided by what I had heard at Ottawa ; by the proclamation of Your Excellency of the 6th of December ; by a letter of Sir John A. Macdonald, dated 16th February ; alarmed by the danger of desperate resistance and of foreign intervention, persuaded that Our Gracious Sovereign would easily pardon her subjects that had erred because too highly provoked ; seeing "irregularities on all sides," I thought myself justifiable in giving a positive and solemn assurance that a complete pardon would be granted. I then promised it. I may have done wrong ; but I cannot believe it, my opinion being that of all those I have heard speaking coolly on this irritating question. It seems to me than an act of clemency is not too much when the peace of a country is at stake. At present this act becomes necessary to restore confidence, without which it is almost impossible to govern the immense territory of the North West. Without this act of mercy, the country may be exposed to renewed and disastrous commotions. If amnesty is not granted, I will be considered by some as having imposed upon the people, and will perhaps only have prepared a fearful reaction, others who will never suspect my sincerity, will easily believe that I have been deceived by the Canadian Government. I will go so far as to say that really I would have been deceived, for it is impossible to understand otherwise what was told to me at Ottawa.

If an "indignation meeting" called by the "loyal inhabitants" of Toronto is sufficient to give a direction to the settlement of affairs at Red

River, every one will easily admit that it is impossible for us to expect liberal measures or even the most elementary justice. I easily understand the pressure brought upon the authorities of Ottawa by such demonstrations, inspired by party spirit rather than by "horror of crime," but I appeal to the tribunal of Our Gracious Sovereign; may the feeble voice of an humble, but submissive and devoted subject reach Her Throne. I feel satisfied that the Royal Clemency will be guided by generosity. I therefore rely on the amnesty; of course the Canadian Government cannot proclaim it, but if Our Gracious Sovereign be pleased to grant it, Your Excellency may rest assured that it will be a guarantee of success for the administration of the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, and that it will command the respectful sympathy of an entire people.

Deign Your Excellency to make an allowance for the precipitation with which I had to write, and believe in the complete and entire devotedness of one who, with profound respect, is

Your Excellency's most humble and obedient servant,

(Signed),                      ALEX.,  
Bishop of St. Boniface, O. M. I.

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I will respectfully observe that Sir John Young would, on this occasion, have failed to fulfil a strict obligation, had he not considered the amnesty promised and certain. His Excellency himself had confided a mission to me. I was giving an account of it, when affirming what I had promised in his name. If my assertions had been erroneous I had a right to be warned that such was the case, and thereby enabled to refute them and to undeceive the people to whom I would not have conveyed the exact idea of those who had invited me to become their interpreter. The Governor General received my observations without giving me to understand that I had been mistaken. I have, therefore, reason to believe that I have faithfully accomplished the duty imposed upon me. So, in my opinion, the Royal word is engaged by the immediate representative of Her Majesty, and there is a great lack of loyalty in efforts made to impede its effect.

I will go farther and say that not only was an amnesty promised by the Imperial authorities but it was, in fact, safeguarded by them.

The Red River Expedition, termed "Expedition of Peace and Civilization" could not set out before the assurance was given that the delegates of the North West were satisfied. Moreover this is what Lord Granville had required, as it appears in a telegram to Sir John Young: "Her Majesty's Government will give proposed military assistance, provided reasonable terms are granted to Red River settlers." This telegram of the fifth of March is not modified by the lamentable event of the eve, for, on the 23rd April, among the conditions without which Earl Granville would not promise the co-operation of the Imperial Government, the following is read: "Canadian Government to accept decision of Her Majesty's Government on all points of the Settlers' Bill of Rights."

What do all these precautions signify? Why is the same name attached to the military expedition as had been given by His Excellency to the mission intrusted to me? Is it necessary for a Government as powerful as that of England to be so cautious when going to suppress "Rebellion" and seize "Murderers" amidst a few hundred Half-breeds that had already laid down arms? Undoubtedly not, but it is necessary for the powerful Government of England as for every Government that has self-respect, to keep up to faith promised, even if it be towards the weakest of nations. Honor above all, is what breathes in all the despatches coming directly from England. Why should others who boast of their loyalty, not seem to heed even in the rudiments?

The Red River expedition organized by Lieutenant General Lindsay was placed under command of Colonel Wolseley. From Thunder Bay, since called "Prince Arthur's Landing," Colonel Wolseley addressed to the people of Red River the following military proclamation:—

"TO THE LOYAL INHABITANTS OF MANITOBA.

"Her Majesty's Government having determined upon stationing some troops among you, I have been instructed by the Lieutenant General commanding in British North America, to proceed to Fort Garry with the force under my command.

"Our mission is one of peace, and the sole object of the expedition is to secure Her Majesty's sovereign authority.

"Courts of law, such as are common to every portion of Her Majesty's Empire, will be duly established, and justice will be impartially administered to all races and all classes, the loyal Indians or Half-breeds being as dear to our Queen as any others of her loyal subjects.

"The force which I have the honor of commanding will enter your Province representing no party, either in religion or politics, and will afford equal protection to the lives and property of all races and creeds.

"The strictest order and discipline will be maintained, and private property will be carefully respected.

"All supplies furnished by the inhabitants to the troops will be duly paid for. Should any one consider himself injured by any individual attached to the force, his grievance will be promptly inquired into.

"All loyal people are earnestly invited to aid me in carrying out the above mentioned objects.

"(Signed), G. J. WOLSELEY,  
"Colonel Commanding Red River Force."

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PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING,  
THUNDER BAY, JUNE 30, 1870.

The above proclamation was forwarded to me, together with the following letter:—



PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING,

THUNDER BAY, JUNE 30, 1870.

" MY LORD,—Enclosed I have the honor to forward you a copy of a proclamation in English and in French, to which I have the honor to request you will be good enough to give the utmost publicity in the several parishes under your Episcopal care.

" Similar copies have been forwarded to the officer representing the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Garry, and to Bishop Macrae.

" I have the honor to be,

" My Lord,

" Your most obedient servant,

" (Signed),

G. J. WOLSELEY,

" Colonel Commanding Red River Force."

To the Lord Bishop TACHÉ, etc., etc., etc.

Red River Settlement.

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The proclamation reached Fort Garry during my absence, and was printed and published by command, and under the immediate direction of Mr. Riel, as the annexionist tendencies of other parties were of a nature to prevent absolutely the publication of the document.

General Lindsay having conferred with the Governor General at Niagara, thought proper to send me the following letter :—

" CLIFTON HOUSE,

" NIAGARA, JULY 11TH, 1870.

" MY LORD,—Colonel Wolseley, commanding the military force *en route* to Fort Garry, has transmitted to you a Military Proclamation, addressed to the inhabitants of Manitoba, which will be forwarded to you via Winnipeg.

" I have the honor to request that before issuing it, you will have the goodness to erase the paragraph in which the English translation commences with the words ' Courts of Laws,' and terminates with those of ' The Loyal Subjects.' Legal affairs being altogether within the functions of the civil authorities.

" I have the honor to be,

" Your Lordship's Obedient Servant,

" (Signed),

JAS. LINDSAY,

" Lieut.-General,

" Commanding Her Majesty's forces in British North America.

" Right Rev. Bishop TACHÉ,

" Fort Garry."

I was still absent when this last document reached St. Boniface. The proclamation having been published it was thought advisable by the administrator of the Diocese to make the General's letter public also. I afterwards wrote to the Lieut.-General, who kindly thanked me for what had been done.

Now, I appeal to the judgment of any one able to combine two ideas : What is the meaning of all this ? What do all these proceedings denote ? What is to be concluded from this luxuriant display of precaution ? What is intended by the assurance given so minutely, if not to indicate that the Red River insurgents were not looked upon as rebels to be subdued by force, but, on the contrary, as subjects that should be protected and defended ?

The last official documents quoted above, also prove that the views of the Imperial Government had been communicated to the superior officers directing and commanding the Red River expedition. It is obvious that this expedition of peace had neither enemies to crush, rebels to disperse, nor criminals to pursue or punish. Colonel Wolseley was moreover well aware that the entire native population of Red River, without distinction, desired the arrival and stationing of the Imperial troops in their midst. He knew it when he addressed me the following letter :—

“ PRINCE ARTHUR'S LANDING,

“ THUNDER BAY, 30TH JUNE, 1870.

“ MY LORD,—I have written to-day to the officer representing the Hudson's Bay Company, at Fort Garry, referring to a letter to him of this day's date, from Mr. Dawson, of the Public Works Departement, in which he has been requested to take immediate steps for opening out a road between the northwest corner of the Lake of the Woods and the termination of Mr. Snow's road, and whereby he has been authorized to expend money for that purpose.

“ I have begged him to render every assistance in his power in obtaining the labor and funds required for this service. I have the honor to request your Lordship's earnest co-operation in doing so, and being aware of the anxiety of your people to welcome us amongst them, I am led to hope that they will avail themselves of this opportunity for proving the sincerity of their wishes.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ My Lord,

“ Your most obedient servant,

“ (Signed),

G. J. WOLSELEY,

“ Colonel Commanding Red River Force.

“ The Right Rev.,

“ To the Lord Bishop TACHÉ, etc.,

“ Red River Settlement.”

Mr. Dawson in his "Report of the Red River Expedition" publishes an extract of a letter from J. H. McTavish, Esq., "The officer representing the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Garry," showing the result of Colonel Wolseley's request. "Enclosed herewith you will find copy of Colonel Wolseley's letter to me.

"On its receipt, I issued notices in the Colonel's name calling for me to commence the work, and went myself through the English portion of the settlement, but failed in getting a single English half-breed or Swampy. None but French half-breeds offered, though it was given out and well understood that the road was to be pushed through in order to hurry in Her Majesty's troops.

"(Signed), J. H. McTAVISH."

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Immediately French half-breeds from the different parishes of the colony complied with the desire of Colonel Wolseley, and went to work to prepare the road by which the expedition was expected, and where, in fact, a part of it did pass. It was then perfectly understood by the Imperial Authorities and by the people themselves, particularly by the so-called "French half-breed rebels," that all the difficulties were over, and that the arrangements concluded sheltered them from all annoyance.

While the expedition was on the way to Fort Garry I was at Montreal. I went in company with His Honor Judge Coursol to offer my regards to the General Commanding Her Majesty's Force in British America.

The distinguished officer, with the frankness that characterizes him, confirmed by his assertions what I already knew to be exactly the aim of the expedition, its object and its non-object. I had again the pleasure of seeing the General with the Hon. Mr. Archibald, and naturally there was nothing said to give a different impression.

On his arrival at Fort Garry I informed Colonel Wolseley of my conversation with General Lindsay. The Colonel kindly owned that the General had mentioned the conversation when writing to him, and that everything was just as I had understood.

As trifling incidents sometimes come to prove a good deal I will take this liberty to cite the following:—"The Rev. Mr. Ritchot accompanied by a few friends called upon Colonel Wolseley, at Fort Garry. Immediately some one ill-disposed and intending to annoy the Colonel, rumored that he had been wanting in regard and politeness towards Mr. Ritchot. My personal knowledge of the courtesy and urbanity of the gallant Colonel did not allow me to accept the rumor, and to be better able to contradict it, I wrote to the Colonel on the subject. He favoured me with the following reply:—

"FORT GARRY, 9TH SEPTEMBER, 1870.

"MY DEAR BISHOP TACHÉ,—In saying good bye to the Rev. Mr. Ritchot the other day. I bowed to him as is customary in England upon such occasions, and having no political position here my private reception of those



who honoured me by a visit, can have no political significance attached to it.

Pray accept my best wishes and my warmest thanks for the kindness your Lordship has extended to me during my short stay in this magnificent country and permit me to subscribe myself,

“ Respectfully yours,

“ (Signed), G. J. WOLSELEY.”

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If later correspondence of certain periodicals or even superior officers, thought fit to publish that, in reality the Colonel had made little of Mr. Ritchot, all that can be concluded is, that in this circumstance as in many others, too much account was made of false reports instead of going to true sources of information. If such had been done the commanding officer would no doubt have replied to others as he did to me. “ My private reception of those who *honored* me by a visit, can have no political significance attached to it.”

The documents we have produced and the conversations referred to, were intended to be used in explaining to my people the views entertained in high quarters, as it was clearly expressed and understood on every occasion. So I am perfectly justified in coming to the conclusion that the military power guaranteed the amesty promised by the Civil power.

In opposition to the conclusion I draw, others bring forth : the way that Colonel Wolseley arrived at Fort Garry ; his proclamation to his troops and a certain “ narrative of the Red River Expedition, by an officer of the expeditionary force ” generally attributed to the Commanding Officer himself. I venture to answer these three objections.

1st. As for the mode of arrival at Fort Garry, I have had an explanation on the subject, and give it as near as I can recall it. “ I feel quite confused,” said the Colonel, “ at the way that things have turned out. We were quietly advancing certain to meet no resistance, when passing through the little Village of Winnipeg, two horsemen arrived at full speed exclaiming : ‘ Colonel Riel and his men want to fight ! ’ You understand Monseigneur that I then had to take some military precautions to approach the Fort.” These are the words of Colonel Wolseley to explain the display of force and strategic evolutions, employed to surround an *open* and *empty* Fort, over which the British flag floated day and night, and into which, according to General Lindsay, the Imperial troops were to enter as any regiment of Her Majesty’s troops entering the barracks at Kingston, Montreal, Quebec, etc.

2nd. I can only regret the harangue or proclamation addressed by Colonel Wolseley to his troops, and in this, many whose loyalty has never been questioned share my feelings. The badge of honor that shines on the breast of the brave, is not exempted from blemish, and it is to be deplored that the hearts that beat within those breasts are not free from all weakness. Men are so disposed that fanaticism and hatred not only blind

them, but the same feelings often become a powerful incentive in overcoming difficulties and surmounting obstacles which nobler motives would leave as invincible. That weakness of the human heart was known and made use of to assure the success of the expedition. It had been organized at the time when the most violent and dangerous passions over-excited public opinion in Canada, and especially in the Province of Ontario. The soldiers enlisted under a banner that they believed to be a banner of blood, were during the whole time kept in excitement, and in a feeling of hatred. The terms "rebels," "murderers," "robbers," &c., seasoned their daily rations, were given as a zest amidst their fatigues and an encouragement to the accomplishment of what remained to be done. On arriving at Fort Garry it seemed necessary to continue the same stratagem, and the commanding officer had the weakness to have recourse to it. Officers and soldiers had nobly done their duty; they were deserving of their country and their Sovereign; it was requisite to resort to a theatrical performance of an inglorious result. History when recording the courage and devotion of the expeditionary force, will repudiate the proclamation of its chief who has branded himself by endeavoring to throw disgrace on an entire people. Love of truth is a distinctive characteristic of a soldier, and I am convinced that Colonel Wolseley reluctantly used the word "banditti," in speaking of a population to which he shortly before and immediately after, gave the most unequivocal marks of trust. The very next day after his arrival at Fort Garry, he ordered one of his staff, Colonel Boulton, to go *alone* and examine the road as far as the north west angle: (100 miles), he allowed all his officers to stray through bush and plain in pursuit of game; he had previously left orders for a company of volunteers to come from Francis by the North West Angle, and chose the same route for a company of regulars on their return; he himself ventured to pass through the same woods and marshes with a few officers and a lady. In almost every one of the above circumstances the parties were guided by French Half-breeds, moving in the midst of the "Métis" population, in a country thinly inhabited, unknown except to the Half-Breeds, and where it would be the easiest thing to do mischief, were its men "banditti" or had even a disposition to become so. Had Colonel Wolseley been sincere in insulting our population, he would have been guilty, military and morally, of placing at the mercy those "banditti" and risking his own life, that of his officers and soldiers, as well as the honor of his flag and the fruit of his expedition. But no! there was not the slightest risk and no where in the world was there less danger than in the midst of those he so improperly stigmatized as "banditti." And he knew it.

3rd. Beyond the observation just made on Colonel Wolseley's proclamation, my personal intercourse with this worthy officer does not admit of any other reproach; so I refuse to believe, although it has been affirmed, that he is the author of the "Narrative of the Red River Expedition, by an Officer of the Expeditionary Force." There is in the said articles of *Blackwood's Magazine* so much venom and hatred, such a mass of falsehood, so much blindness in the author, that I cannot suppose them written by any

superior officer of the British army. An individual may for a moment forget himself and commit a breach of duty, but to write anything like "Narrative," &c., where such innate malice and contempt of truth are required that it would be too painful for me to believe that it had fallen from the pen of a person I had hitherto respected.

To resume my opinion on the triple objection just examined, I will say that neither the simulated attack on Fort Garry, the philippic of Colonel Wolseley, nor the "Narrative," prove anything against the promise of amnesty made by the Imperial Authorities, and safe-guarded by them.

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## II

### The Federal Authorities and the Amnesty.

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When treating of the Amnesty by the Government of the Dominion, it is easily understood that I cannot even insinuate that such prerogative of mercy, such suspension of the ordinary laws, can rest with Ottawa or that the grant or promulgation thereof is within the Province of any Colonial authority whatsoever. The pardon by amnesty of political offences or of anything connected with them, necessarily remains with the supreme authority, and in the present case, could not be granted by any one except by Her Majesty the Queen of England. This knowledge and conviction does not exclude another, viz: that the Canadian Government could and should have secured the grant of amnesty, its mediation being necessary to that effect as the constitutional medium between Canadian and Imperial authorities. Consequently, if amnesty has been asked from the Canadian Government it was not that it could originate there, but merely to secure its intervention in soliciting the benevolent application of the Royal Prerogative. After this explanation I shall give my meaning of the two words heading this paragraph: "The Federal Authorities and the Amnesty."

To convey an idea of my opinion on the subject, I will examine what Canada was in duty bound to do to secure the amnesty; what it had promised by its accredited agent, and what it has done since.

I. Was Canada bound to do anything to secure amnesty? To this question, I answer without hesitation: Canada was bound to use the utmost endeavors to thus settle the Red River difficulties, and extirpate as far as possible, even the very remembrance of the same.

This, my opinion, rests on a mere principle of equity, which principle imposes the obligation to make amends for faults committed and misfortunes occasioned. This obligation that binds every individual is still more stringent for societies and nations. In the present case, it is Canada that *has given occasion to an outburst of violence* in Red River. So Canada is bound to make amends, not merely by opposing a wide and liberal policy to a narrow and hasty legislation, as has been done, not only by indemnifying those who have suffered pecuniary losses, which has also been done, but moreover, Canada was obliged to do all in its power to secure a general and complete amnesty in order to restore to their former condition, in the eye of the law, all those who, in one way or another had taken a part in those troubles. I say that all and every one should have been pardoned, whether they

were the accredited agents of the Government or the men deceived by the false attitude of the same agents or the men excited by the premature and illicit interference of Canadians in Red River country.

I know that what I here advance is, at least in part, adverse to the views entertained by many; nevertheless, I am convinced that all judicious and impartial men will admit it, after mature consideration.

I therefore repeat that Canada had to solicit the amnesty, since it was Canada that caused the outbreak. My assertion is easily proved, and I defend it by arguments based on authentic and irrefutable documents.

Canadian delegates were sent to England to negotiate for the acquisition of Rupert's Land and the North West Territories. Negotiations were conducted and ended without it being brought to mind that a civilized population inhabited the country. The report of the delegates was placed before the Canadian Parliament in May 1869. During the same session the report was accepted, and the Canadian Legislature made and passed an act entitled: "An Act for the temporary government of Rupert's Land and the North West Territory when united with Canada."

Parliament assembled at Ottawa, as well as the delegates sent to England, forgot or did not know that they were legislating for people that had their rights, their laws, their habits, and their aspirations for settlements inhabited by British subjects, proud of such a privilege and jealous of the independence it affords.

At Ottawa, so little is made of this people, that they are not even mentioned, it is not even thought worth while to inform them of the measures adopted relative to their country and to themselves. The Governor and Council of Assiniboia were left as ignorant of what was going on, as the rest of the community. No one had the courtesy to inform them that Canada, their future master, was planning their new political organization and giving a new direction to their affairs. Such is the immediate cause of our troubles. Who has given occasion to them? It was not only the Hon. Cartier and McDougall delegated to England; it was not only the Honorable the Privy Council, advising His Excellency the Governor General; it was the Canadian Parliament, the three branches of the Canadian Legislature; consequently it was Canada.

This 'blunder,' which I may call a national one, having entailed misfortune, I consider that, at least in a certain proportion, the Canadian nation becomes responsible for the whole; and is, consequently, under the moral obligation of repairing, as far as possible, the calamities resulting from its mode of acting.

Having taken a course evidently false and inconsiderate, Canada continues therein: "On the 10th July, 1869, the Honorable the Minister of Public Works requests Colonel Dennis to proceed without delay to Fort Garry (Red River) for the purpose of selecting the most suitable localities for the survey of Townships for immediate settlement. To confer and advise with Mr. Snow especially as to the character of the country about Oak Point, and its adaptability for immediate settlement." And it was added: "You will report to this department the plan of survey you propose to adopt (with a rough map) as soon as you shall have determined upon it; but in the meantime, until you receive notice of its approval or



modification, you will proceed with such surveying operations at Oak Point, and the vicinity of Red River as may appear to you to be necessary in any event."

The reader will please remark that "Oak Point" and the portion of the "vicinity of Red River," were settled and claimed by French Canadian half-breeds. Colonel Dennis, on his arrival at Red River, could not fail to notice, at once, signs of dissatisfaction, which he pointed out to the Canadian Government, in a letter dated 21st August, 1869, of which I quote what follows:—

"SIR—I have the honor to report to you that, in company with Dr. Schultz, I arrived at this settlement yesterday, about 2 o'clock p.m. .... I find that a considerable degree of irritation exists among the native population in view of surveys and settlements being made without the Indian title having been first extinguished. .... I am satisfied that the Government will, in the first place, have to undertake and effect the extinction of the Indian title. This question must be regarded as of the greatest importance. In connection therewith, I would reiterate to you my conviction, as expressed while at Ottawa, that no time should be lost. The necessity for prompt action is more apparent to me now than it seemed even then.

"Supposing the transfer from the Company to have been complete, it is possible that the object may be carried out yet this fall.

"There can be no question as to the prejudicial effects in retarding the settlement of the country, should Half-breeds and Indians assume a position of hostility to any extent whatever towards incoming settlers or the government. The difficulties of the position may be much enhanced by giving the discontented parties the winter to brood over, and concert measures in opposition to the views of the Government. In the meantime the French half-breeds, who constitute about one-fourth or one fifth (say 3,000 souls) of the settlement, are likely to prove a turbulent element. This class have gone so far as to threaten violence should surveys be attempted to be made."

The 28th of the same month, Colonel Dennis wrote: "I have again to remark the uneasy feeling which exists in the Half-breed and Indian element with regard to what they conceive to be premature action taken by the Government in proceeding to effect a survey of the lands."

Overlooking the above information, a proposed system of surveys was approved by the Privy Council. Regardless of harm already done, and heedless of its consequences the following instructions are sent to Colonel Dennis:—

"OTTAWA, OCTOBER 4TH, 1869.

"SIR,—I have the honor to inform you that the Government, upon the recommendation of the Minister of Public Works, has approved of the system proposed by you in your report dated 28th of August last, for the survey and sub-division of Townships in the North West territories. You are, therefore, authorised to proceed with the surveys on the plan proposed.

"I have, etc.,

"(Signed),

F. BRAUN,  
Secretary."

Meanwhile the surveys were going on, and produced the effect naturally expected by all. I leave to others to ascertain who is personally responsible for these proceedings. I merely say that they are to be charged to Canada. A member of the Cabinet of Ottawa, writing on these surveys goes so far as to say : "The course taken was the most imprudent that could have been adopted. It can only be ascribed to infatuation."

Still more, information from the most reliable quarters were furnished to the Canadian Government, about the dissatisfaction prevailing at Red River. No attention was paid to the informants. On the 29th September of the same year, a commission under the Great Seal of Canada, was issued "appointing the Hon. W. McDougall, C. B., to be Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest Territories," in view of the transfer of the said territories to the Canadian Government. In the month of October the would-be Lieutenant Governor set out taking "*with him 350 breech-loading rifles with 30,000 rounds of ammunition,*" (circumstance published in the newspapers of the Canadian capital), to go and enter a country where Canada had not the slightest authority, and which was not transferred until the 16th July of the following year.

After such proceedings, no one will be surprised at the saying of Lord Granville, 30th November, 1869 :....."the Canadian Government.....undertook certain operations in respect of land..... and directed the future Lieutenant Governor to enter the territory. M. McDougall, was met, it appears, by armed resistance, and the disturbances *caused by his presence*..... The Canadian Government having, by this measure *given an occasion* to an outburst of violence in a territory."

I have placed in italics the words *caused by his presence* and *given occasion* used by the most Honorable the Secretary of State for the colonies to show to the Canadian Government that the troubles were the result of its policy.

The same fact is acknowledged in a report of a committee of the Honorable the Privy Council, dated 16th December, 1869. "The resistance of this misguided people is evidently not against the sovereignty of Her Majesty or the Government of the Hudson's Bay Company, *but to the assumption of Government by Canada.*"

Things were getting worse and worse at Red River, because nothing was done to remedy the evil; on the contrary, the so-called "Canadian party" succeeded in hurrying the authorized Canadian agents towards regrettable and illegal measures.

The 1st December, 1869, the future Canadian Lieutenant Governor issued a proclamation, in which he "used the Queen's name without her authority; attributed to Her Majesty acts which she had not yet performed; assumed the authority of Lieutenant Governor which did not belong to him, and purported to extinguish the powers belonging to the only legal Governor of the Territory," who, in fact, resigned his authority, supposing it extinguished, (as Lord Granville had foreseen) by a proclamation, the nullity of which was not suspected by him. The same day, the same future Lieutenant Governor of the Northwest set forth another proclamation, by which he nominated and appointed John Stoughton Dennis to be his lieutenant and a conservator of the peace in and for the Northwest Territory.

Authorized and empowered him as such, to raise, organize, arm, equip and provision a sufficient force within the said Territory, and with the said force to attack, arrest, disarm or disperse armed men, and with the force aforesaid to assault, fire upon, pull down, or break into any fort, house, stronghold, or other place in which the said armed men may be found.

In virtue of these false documents the Canadian agent named by a so called Canadian Lieutenant Governor enters a territory that did not belong to Canada, seized a fort, garrisoned it with Indians, made an appeal to arms and, in fact, enlisted, armed and equipped all those who answered his call. Who will wonder at the sharp remonstrance addressed to Hon. W. McDougall by the Honorable the Secretary of State, for the Provinces, in despatch dated 24th December, 1869: "The exertion of the military force against the misguided people now in arms, even if under the sanction of law, was not to be hastily risked..... But as the organization and use of such a force was, under the circumstances, entirely illegal, the Governor General in Council cannot disguise from you the weight of responsibility you have incurred.....

"The receipt of your despatch of the 6th instant, which reached me on the 23rd with its enclosures '2 A,' '2 B,' '2 C,' and the course taken by Colonel Dennis as described in those papers, make it necessary without further delay, to send this despatch by a special messenger.

"I wish I could inform you that this report had entirely relieved the Governor General and Council from the anxiety already expressed. It is true that no blood had been shed up to the 6th, and you had not carried out your intention of occupying the Stockade, near Pembina, with a armed party, but the proceedings of Colonel Dennis, as reported by himself, are so reckless and extraordinary that there can be no relief from solicitude while an officer so imprudent is acting under your authority.

"Had the inhabitants of Rupert's Land, on the breaking out of the disturbances, risen and put an end to them, or had Governor McTavish organized a force to occupy his forts and maintain his authority, all would have been well, and Riel and his people would have been responsible for any bloodshed or property destroyed. But Colonel Dennis with no legal authority, proceeds to seize the fort, then in possession, not of the insurgents, but of the Hudson's Bay Company, and to garrison it with a mixed force of whites and Indians, and prepares to give battle to the insurgents, should a junction be formed with some forces which he has ordered to be drilled on the Assiniboine. He appears never to have thought that the moment war commenced, all the white inhabitants would be at the mercy of the Indians, by whom they are largely outnumbered, and divided as they would, he might be easily overpowered.

"It is impossible to read the Colonel's account of his attempt to persuade Judge Black to aid him in proclaiming Martial Law without strong feeling of regret that you should have been represented in the settlement by a person with so little discretion. It is no wonder that Judge Black was frightened at the proposal, as he must have known that Colonel Dennis would have to answer at the Bar of Justice for every life lost, by such an assumption of authority, and that the illegal seizure of an American citizen,



would at once provoke interference in the quarrel and lead to very serious complications.

“ I have, etc.,

“(Signed,)

JOSEPH HOWE.”

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The Honorable M. Howe while giving a severe but just appreciation of the proceedings of Canadian agents, failed to draw the conclusion that did not escape Lord Graville, as may be seen in his dispatch of the 26th January, already quoted. “ I much more seriously regret the proclamation put forth by Mr. McDougall, and the commission issued by him to Colonel..... These proceedings..... *have certainly enhanced the responsibility of the Canadian Government.*”

All this has but too often repeated, and if I go over it again, it is merely to express the regret that Canada has not, long ere this, caused it to be buried in oblivion, by repairing the consequences of the responsibility incurred. Far from me the desire or intention to recall bitter remembrances, or the idea to provoke painful recriminations; quite the contrary, I make the largest allowance possible for circumstances. I willingly admit good faith and the best motives in those who gave orders. I do not overlook the merit of those who obeyed, and who, in so doing, exposed their lives for what they supposed to be a legitimate object. Nevertheless, the bare recited facts, leaving all bad motives aside, cannot but prove that illegal and even criminal acts have been committed by official Canadian agency; that such acts have led to the most deplorable results; and I moreover say: Canada thus guilty was bound to solicit an amnesty by all the means in its power. Yes, I repeat, Canada should have begged the pardon by amnesty for its own agents, the agents of its own government who had “*caused disturbances.*” Canada should have asked pardon by amnesty for those who, believing the same agents, had seconded and assisted them in reprehensible acts. Canada had also the obligation to press the grant of amnesty in favor of those that such inconsiderate proceedings provoked to a resistance less guilty than the attack that gave rise to it. I say *less guilty* in conformance with the appreciation expressed by the Honorable the Secretary of State for the Provinces, in his despatch of the 24th of December already lengthily quoted: “ It was equally clear, that if you were invested with the legal title to govern, without being able to get into Rupert's Land, or exercise any authority, the revolutionary government would be strengthened by your weakness, and *would in fact* (the proclamation having superseded Governor McTavish) *be the only Government in the territory*, untill put down by force of arms.

The Honorable the Privy Council did not hesitate to express the same views on the subject even before the events of the beginning of December had been brought to their knowledge. I read in the report of their committee dated 16th December, as follows: “ While the issue of the proclamation would put an end to the government of the Hudson's Bay Company it would not substitute government by Canada therefor. Such a govern-

ment is physically impossible until the armed resistance is ended, and thus a state of anarchy and confusion would ensue and *a legal status might be given to any Government de facto* formed by the inhabitants for the protection of their lives and property."

If the Canadian Government itself did thus, openly and officially, express such views, relative to the proclamations and warlike preparations of the beginning of December, what can be said of the movement that took place two months later, and that had the lamentable result of the killing of Sutherland and Parisien on one hand and the execution of Thomas Scott on the other?

Once more I regret that I am obliged to recall these deplorable circumstances, merely to express the regret that Canadians have not allowed them to be cast into oblivion.

The last appeal to arms was not, it is true, made through accredited Canadian agency, still, it is only fair to keep Canada responsible for it, because the movement was instigated by Canadians and was nothing but a repetition and continuation of the events of December. The native inhabitants of the Red River would never have taken arms against one another, there would have been no loss of lives during our political difficulties had it not been for the undue interference of Canadians.

I then say that Canada, as a nation, has assumed an immense responsibility in the troubles of the Northwest, and it was its duty to do all in its power, to allay the anxiety, and thereby complete as far as possible the reparations required in honor and justice.

II. Has Canada by its accredited agents promised amnesty? I answer without the slightest hesitation yes, such promise has been made repeatedly both verbally and in writing.

The reader will please remember what I have already said, when speaking of the amnesty by the Government of the Dominion, I merely refer to its mediation with Her Majesty, or to the knowledge it may have of the Royal good will.

While at Ottawa in February, 1870, *at the particular request of the Canadian Government*, I had long and numerous interviews with the members of the Cabinet, especially with those more particularly engaged in the question of the Northwest. By a decision of the Privy Council, taken in my presence, all the documents relative to Red River affairs were handed to me, and I had all the facility to study them and to receive all desirable explanations. I saw members of the Cabinet privately. I saw them together and even with the Governor General. They spoke without reserve, and they requested me to freely repeat to the people of Red River what I was told at Ottawa. One desire, above all, seemed to predominate, the Government desired the pacification without violence, without having recourse to force, without revenge, without spite. The ministers laughed at the idea of subjugating and conquering as perfectly ridiculous, and spoke of nothing more than to peaceably gain the assent and good will of the people. The tone used was so constantly the same that unless afflicted by a degree of stupidity, which I cannot admit, I had reason to believe that His Excellency was right when writing to me on the subject, "You are fully in possession of the views of my Government."

All my intercourse with the Federal Ministers, all the information furnished me by them, all tended to persuade me that the grant of the amnesty was the easiest question at stake, and that the Canadian Government really deserved the approval given by Earl Granville in his dispatch of 8th January, 1870, already mentioned. "I observe with great satisfaction the anxiety manifested by the Canadian Government to avoid any collision with the insurgents in the Red River settlement, and to *exhaust all means of explanation and conciliation before having recourse to force.*"

It is easy to judge of the impression produced on my mind, by a testimony coming from such high quarters, and commented upon with the legitimate satisfaction experienced by the Federal Ministers at the approval of their conduct by the Cabinet of Her Majesty.

Nevertheless, as it has been said, that "perhaps I did not understand," or that I had not rightly expressed the views of the Government, I will continue to give the proofs of my convictions, which convictions could alone have inspired my mode of objection. The following letter was handed to me at Ottawa by the Honorable the Secretary of State for the Provinces :

" OTTAWA, 16TH FEBRUARY, 1870.

" MY LORD,—I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General to acknowledge and thank you for the promptitude with which you placed your services at the disposal of this Government, and undertook a winter voyage and journey, that you might, by your presence and influence, aid in the suppression of the unlooked for disturbances which had broken out in the Northwest.

" I have the honor to enclose for your information :

" 1. A copy of the instructions given to the Hon. Wm. McDougall on the 28th September last.

" 2. Copy of a further letter of instructions addressed to Mr. McDougall on the 7th November.

" 3. Copy of a letter of instructions to the Very Rev. Vicar General Thibault on the 4th December.

" 4. Copy of a proclamation, issued by His Excellency the Governor General, addressed to the inhabitants of the Northwest territories by the express desire of the Queen.

" 5. Copy of a letter addressed to the Secretary of State, by Donald A. Smith, Esq., of Montreal, on the 24th November.

" 6. Copy of a letter of instructions addressed by me to Mr. Smith, on the 26th November last.

" 7. A semi-official letter, addressed by the Minister of Justice, on the 3rd January, 1870, to Mr. Smith, also—

" 8. Copy of the Commission issued to Mr. Smith on the 17th of January, 1870.

" Copies of the proclamation issued by Mr. McDougall, at or near Pembina, and of the Commission issued to Colonel Dennis, having been printed in the Canadian papers and widely circulated at the Red River,

are, it is assumed, quite within your reach, and are not furnished ; but it is important that you should know that the proceedings by which the lives and properties of the people of Rupert's Land were jeopardized for a time, were at once disavowed and condemned by the Government of this Dominion, as you will readily discover in the dispatch addressed by me to Mr. McDougall, on the 24th December, a copy of which is enclosed.

“ Your Lordship will perceive in these papers the policy which it was, and is, the desire of the Canadian Government to establish in the North West. The people of Canada have no interest in the creation of institutions in Rupert's Land which public opinion condemns, nor would they wish to see a fine race of people trained to discontent and insubordination by the presence of an unwise system of Government, to which British subjects are unaccustomed or averse. They look forward to the period when institutions moulded upon those which the other Provinces enjoy, may be established, and in the mean time would deeply regret if the civil and religious liberty of the whole population were not adequately protected by such temporary arrangements as it may be prudent at present to make.

“ A convention has been called, and is now sitting at Fort Garry, to collect the views of the people as to the powers which they may consider it wise for Parliament to confer, and the Local Legislature to assume. When the proceedings of that Conference have been reviewed by the Privy Council, you may expect to hear from me again ; and, in the meantime, should they be communicated to you on the way, His Excellency will be glad to be favored with any observations that you may have leisure to make.

“ You are aware that the Very Revd. the Vicar General Thibeault, and Messrs. Donald A. Smith and Charles DeSalaberry, are already in Rupert's Land, charged with a Commission from Government. Enclosed are letters to those gentlemen, of which you will oblige me by taking charge, and I am commanded to express the desire of His Excellency that you will co-operate with them in their well directed efforts to secure a peaceful solution of the difficulties in the Northwest Territories, which have caused His Excellency much anxiety, but which by your joint endeavors, it is hoped, may be speedily removed.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ My Lord,

“ Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

“ (Signed),

JOSEPH HOWE.

“ The Very Reverend,

“ The Bishop of St. Boniface.”

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It is useless to say that the very fact of requesting a Bishop to return in haste to the midst of his flock, in order to bring a peaceful solution of difficulties, brings with it the idea of an amnesty to be granted by the

authorities as well as that of voluntary submission on the part of the people. The Pastor is the father of his people, and it would be unreasonable to expect that he will act the part of a policeman or of a constable. Consequently, the message entrusted to me was one of peace, so the "desire of His Excellency was that I would co-operate" with the above mentioned gentle "to secure a *peaceful solution of the difficulties of the North West.*"

Now, a word of explanation on the documents furnished to me, 1 and 2. Copies of instructions given to Mr. McDougall at different times, were to be brought before the people to convince them of the liberal intentions of the Canadian Government.

3. The letter of the Honorable the Secretary of State, to the Very Revd. J. B. Thibeault, V. G., contains the following passages :—

" OTTAWA, DECEMBER 4TH, 1869.

" SIR,—I am commanded by His Excellency the Governor General to convey to you in the form of instructions for your guidance the grounds of the hope entertained here that your mission of peace and conciliation will be entirely successful "..... "had the Queen's Government or the Dominion imitated the rash and reckless conduct of some of those who have taken part in this disturbance, there would ere this have been blood-shed and civil war in Rupert's Land, with the prospect of the flame spreading along the frontier as the fire spreads upon the prairie. Fortunately calmer counsels have prevailed both in England and at Ottawa. The Proclamation of the Queen's representative with copies of which you will be furnished in French and English, will convey to her people the solemn words of their Sovereign, who possessed of ample power to enforce her authority, yet confides in their loyalty and affectionate attachment to her throne.....

" I think it unnecessary to make more than a passing reference to the acts of folly and indiscretion attributed to persons who have assumed to represent the Dominion and to speak in its name, but who have acted on their own responsibility and without the knowledge or sanction of this Government.

" In undertaking at this inclement season of the year, so long a journey in the public service, you display, Venerable Sir, a spirit of patriotism which I am commanded to assure you, is fully appreciated by the Queen's representative and by the Privy Council.

" I have, etc.,

" (Signed), JOSEPH HOWE."

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Mr. Thibeault had devoted the greater part of his life to the advantage of the North West. During thirty-six years he had exercised his apostolic labour amidst the inhabitants of those vast regions. This is sufficient to



show his affection for them. The venerable missionary was taking a few months rest at Quebec. Notwithstanding his age and infirmities he is solicited to set out in the middle of winter for Fort Garry. Any one acquainted with Mr. Thibeault knows perfectly well that he would never have made a step towards Red River, had he not been entirely satisfied that the Canadian Government was kindly disposed towards the people, and that they could, without hesitation, consent to join in the Confederation. Mr. Thibeault would never have left Quebec for Fort Garry had he entertained the slightest doubt as to the grant of the amnesty; and, in fact, without it what would be the signification of '*a mission of peace and conciliation.*'

4. In given me, in an official way, the Proclamation issued by His Excellency on the 6th December, the Canadian Government took the implicit engagement to do all in its power to secure the effect. This Proclamation had been previously entrusted to Mr. Thibeault who, nevertheless, had not published it, owing to a letter addressed to him by the Honorable the Secretary of State, in which I read: "You will not distribute the Proclamations until you get to Pembina and after consultation with Mr. McDougall." Mr. McDougall had left Pembina when Mr. Thibeault arrived there, so his advice could not be taken and the Proclamation was left there for the time.

The Canadian Government, when entrusting me with the same at such an advanced period of the troubles, and with the knowledge that the Provisional Government mastered the situation, evidently had the desire that I should use it in helping the pacification of the country and, consequently, authorized me to give the guarantees promised in the same Proclamation.

The documents 5, 6, 7, regarding Mr. Smith's commission under the Great Seal of Canada, contained nothing to contradict what I have since said and done. These last, on the contrary, strengthen my convictions and justify the course I have taken.

The following is an extract of a letter of the Honorable Mr. Howe to the Special Commissioner :—

" OTTAWA, DECEMBER 10TH, 1869.

" DONALD A. SMITH, ESQ., ETC., ETC.,

" Montreal.

" SIR,—I have the honor to inform you that His Excellency the Governor General, has been pleased to appoint you Special Commissioner to inquire into and report upon the causes and extent of the armed obstruction offered at the Red River in the North West Territory to the peaceable ingress of the Honorable Wm. McDougall, the gentleman selected to be the Lieutenant-Governor of that country on its union with Canada.

" Also to inquire into any report upon the causes of the discontent and dissatisfaction at the proposed change that now exists there.

" Also to explain to the inhabitants the principles on which the Government of Canada intend to govern the country, and to remove any misapprehensions that may exist on the subject.

“ And also to take such steps in concert with Mr. McDougall and Governor McTavish, as may seem most proper for effecting the peaceable transfer of the country.

“ You will, of course, consult Governor McTavish and endeavour to arrange one system of concerted action in the pacification of the country, Mr. McDougall, the Hudson’s Bay authorities and yourself.

“ As the informations received by the Government here are necessarily imperfect, and as the circumstances at the Red River are continually changing, it is not considered expedient to hamper you with more specific instances.

“ You will therefore act according to the best of your judgement.”.....

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So the Honorable Donald A. Smith, Special Commissioner, was also to take “such steps as may seem most proper for effecting the *peaceable* transfer of the country, and endeavor to arrange one system for the *pacification* of the country, (and after all) act according to best of his judgment. As the circumstances at the Red River were continually changing it was not considered expedient to *hamper* him with more specific instructions.

Whilst giving me all the documents and requesting me to co-operate with Messrs. Thibeault, Smith and DeSalabery it was surely agreed to that the promise made to me, would not be modified by a situation that the said three gentlemen might have accepted or which circumstances might have forced them to accept previous to my arrival.

And why give me the despatch of the 24th of December censuring so severely the conduct of employees of the Canadian Government, if not to persuade the people of Red River that there was no intention to reduce them by force, but on the contrary, merely to ask their assent which, of course, was impossible without assurance of an amnesty.

I would recommend to the most serious attention to the following letter addressed and handed to me by the Honorable the Minister of Justice, Sir John A. Macdonald:—

[Private.]

“ DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, OTTAWA,  
“ CANADA, FEBRUARY 16TH, 1870.

“ MY DEAR LORD,—Before you leave Ottawa on your mission of peace, I think it well to reduce to writing the substance of the conversation I had the honor to have with you this morning. I mark this letter ‘private’ in order that it may not be made a public document to be called for by Parliament, prematurely; but you are quite at liberty to use it in such a manner as you think most advantageous.

“ I hope that ere your arrival at Fort Garry, the insurgents, after the explanations that have been entered into by Messrs. Thibeault, DeSalabery

and Smith, will have laid down their arms and allowed Governor McTavish to resume the administration of public affairs.

“ In such case, by the Act of the Imperial Parliament of last session, all the public functionaries will still remain in power, and the Council of Assiniboine will be restored to their former position.

“ Will you be kind enough to make full explanations to the Council on behalf of the Canadian Government, as to the feelings, which animate not only the Governor General, but the whole Government with respect to the mode of dealing with the Northwest.

“ We have fully explained to you and desire you to assure the Council authoritatively that it is the intention of Canada to grant to the people of the Northwest, the same free institutions which they themselves enjoy. Had not these unfortunate events occurred, the Canadian Government had hoped long ere this to have received a report from the Council through Mr McDougall as to the best means of speedily organizing the Government with representative institutions.

“ I hope that they will be able immediately to take up that subject and to consider and report without delay, on the general policy that should immediately be adopted.

“ It is obvious that the most inexpensive mode for the administration of affairs should at first be adopted. As the preliminary expense of organizing the Government after union with Canada, must in the first place be defrayed from the Canadian Treasury, there will be a natural objection in the Canadian Parliament to a large expenditure.

“ As it would be unwise to subject the Government of the territory to a recurrence of the humiliation already suffered by Governor McTavish, you can inform him that if he organizes a local police of 25 men, or more if absolutely necessary, that the expense will be defrayed by the Canadian Government.

“ You will be good enough to endeavor to find out Monkman, the person to whom through Colonel Dennis, Mr. McDougall gave instructions to communicate with the Saulteux Indians. He should be asked to surrender his letter, and be informed that he ought not to proceed upon it. The Canadian Government will see that he is compensated for any expense that he has already incurred.

“ In case a delegation is appointed to proceed to Ottawa, you can assure them that they will be kindly received and their suggestions fully considered ; their expenses coming here and returning, and whilst staying in Ottawa will be defrayed by us.

“ You are authorized to state that the two years during which the present tariff shall remain undisturbed, will commence from the 1st January, 1871, instead of last January as first proposed.

“ Should the question arise as to the consumption of any stores or goods belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company by the insurgents, you are authorized to inform the leaders that if the Company's Government is restored, not only will there be a general amnesty granted, but, in case the



Company should claim the payment for such stores, that the Canadian Government will stand between the insurgents and all harm.

“ Wishing you a prosperous journey and happy results.

“ I beg to remain,

“ With much respect,

“ Your very faithful servant,

“(Signed),

JOHN A. MACDONALD.

“ The Right Reverend,

“ the Bishop of St. Boniface,

“ Fort Garry.”

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“ His letter is but the ‘ substance ’ of one of my conversations with the Honorable Premier, and it is easy to judge by it of the conversations themselves, all tending to explain to me my ‘ mission of peace,’ and requesting me to ‘ *act, to the best of my judgment* ’ to bring, at all events, a peaceable solution of the difficulties, and thereby facilitate the transfer of the Northwest to the Dominion of Canada.”

“ I left Ottawa on the 17th February. At St. Paul, Minnesota, I obtained possession of the ‘ Bill of Rights,’ as agreed upon by the ‘ Committee.’ I telegraphed to the Honorable Mr. Howe, who answered immediately. Propositions satisfactory in the main, but let the delegation come here to settle the details.”

“ Arrived at Fort Garry, I ascertained the gravity of the situation, which was more perilous and more difficult than I had anticipated. All that the Federal Ministers had said to me then appeared so much the more necessary, that it was the only possible and satisfactory solution of the difficulties. I carefully observed the state of things, and after consulting with those with whom I had to confer, I became convinced that nothing was more urgent than to restore confidence by assuring the ‘ leaders ’ of the Provisional Government of the liberal intentions of the Canadian Government. I repeated what I had been authorized and requested to say, and I assured them that the promise of amnesty that had been made would not be retracted. I had not the slightest doubt (and events have come to prove) that the Honorable the Privy Council when expressing the desire to see the Hudson’s Bay Company again in power, had only in view to effect the transfer of the Northwest to Canada without further complications.

“ It was evident the Provisional Government that has been formed, and that was recognised by all parties, previous to my arrival, could not be an obstacle to the entry into Confederation, and would more easily bring about the pacification of the country, rather than impede it. I thence concluded that the words of Sir John A. Macdonald’s letter to me might be applied to the situation: You are authorized to inform the leaders that if the Company’s Government is restored, *not only will there be a general amnesty granted*, but, in case the Company should claim the payment for (their) stores, that the Canadian Government will stand between the insurgents and all harm.”

It is true that the Company's Government was not restored, but the Provisional Government that replaced it, had received assent of the very representatives of the Hudson's Bay Company. Governor McTavish, consulted by two members of the "Convention" on the propriety of forming such a government, had replied: "Form a Government for God's sake, and restore peace and order in the settlement." Afterwards the Honorable Donald A. Smith, moved by praise-worthy motives, contributed to consolidate the same Government as it appears in his report page 6th..... "fully appreciating the significance of this; the Bishop of Rupert's Land and the Protestant clergy generally, now earnestly counselled the people to elect their delegates (to the Provisional Government.) I entirely concur with this view of the case, and Archdeacon McLean having kindly offered to accompany me, we visited the different parts of the settlement and found that in several parishes the people, and those the most loyal to the British Crown, and most desirous for union with Canada, had already chosen their councillors. I explained to all that the Council was to be provisional in the strictest sense of the word, intended expressly for effecting the transference of the country to Canada, and for insuring safety of life and property in the meantime."

It therefore may be seen that what I found established in Assiniboia, on my arrival, secured what the Canadian Government wished above all, when calling for the restoration of the Company's Government. Such situation did not, therefore, annihilate the sole condition expressed by the Honorable Premier, to which the grant of a general amnesty and indemnity for losses were attached. Consequently, I communicated to the "leaders" the promise made by Sir John A. Macdonald.

Instead of rectifying my error, if I have committed one, I have been left in it until this day. I have written and spoken, over and over again, to the Federal Ministers, whose words I had conveyed to the people of Red River, and they invariably gave me to understand that my conduct and assertions at Fort Garry harmonized perfectly with their views and desires, and that I was entirely justifiable in saying that a full and complete amnesty would be granted, meanwhile maintaining the principle that the exercise of the prerogative of mercy rested solely with Her Majesty the Queen, and that the Canadian Government had no power to grant such amnesty.

The promise made having largely contributed to restore confidence, I strongly recommended to send the delegates without delay, their departure seeming to be adjourned indefinitely.

Sir John A. Macdonald's letter "assuring them that they would be kindly received, their suggestions fully considered, their expenses coming and returning and while staying in Ottawa would be defrayed by the Canadian Government."

Mr. Howe's telegram, asking for a delegation, even after he had received the "Bill of Rights," caused the greatest satisfaction, and determined the Provisional Government to take the important step proposed.

The delegates left Fort Garry on the 22nd March, reached Ottawa and were received officially, negotiated with the Canadian Government taking for a basis of the same negotiations a certain Bill of Rights *not that pre-*

pared by the Convention, and which I had telegraphed to Mr. Howe but quite a different one subsequently framed by the *Executive of the Provisional Government*, and officially handed to the delegates by the Secretary of the same Government.

The 12th clause of this "Bill of Rights" [or rather instructions] was at once brought forward as a condition *sine qua non* of any agreement between the delegates of the Northwest and the Government of Canada. This condition reads as follows :—

## XIX.

"That all debts contracted by the Provisional Government of the Territory of the Northwest now called Assiniboia in consequence of the illegal and inconsiderated measures adopted by Canadian officials, to bring about a civil war in our midst, be paid out of the Dominion Treasury ; and that none of the Provisional Government, or any of those acting under them be in any way held liable or responsible with regard to the movement or any of the action which led to the present negotiations."

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of this. The Honorable Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George E. Cartier, who had been officially appointed by their Government to treat with the delegates of the Northwest, declared "that they were in a position to assure the delegates that the intention of Her Majesty was to grant it (the amnesty) ; that they could guarantee its promulgation, and that it would, in fact, be proclaimed immediately after the passing of the bill of Manitoba."

As a proof of this assertion, I have the official report of the delegation both to the Provisional Government and to the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia. I have, moreover, a petition addressed to Her Majesty the Queen of England, in February, 1872, and signed by Messrs. Ritchot and Scott, the only two delegates that remained at Ottawa, until the close of negotiations. I also have the sworn affidavit of the Revd. Mr. Ritchot, already cited in full on page 12, and I may add, I have the acknowledgment of the fact, made to me by the Ministers themselves.

The interview of the 19th May, referred to in the above mentioned unexceptionable document, was occasioned by a letter of the Revd. Mr. Ritchot to Sir George E. Cartier. The letter written on the eve of the said interview (18th May), contains the following paragraph : "The questions mentioned in the 19th clause of our instructions, especially the amnesty, are of the utmost importance. I am satisfied, and the past is a security for the future, that previous to our departure you will furnish us all the guarantees promised by Sir John and you, relative to these most important questions."

Having received this letter, before giving a written answer, Sir George E. Cartier went himself for the delegates, and accompanied them to His Excellency the Governor General, that he might "renew the assurances that the amnesty would certainly be granted."

It was in the same circumstance (on the 19th May) that the immediate Representative of Her Majesty the Queen, specially authorized to use the

name of our beloved Sovereign, gave to the delegates the “renewed assurance” spoken of by the Revd. Mr. Ritchot in his sworn declaration.

This having been done, the Honorable Canadian Minister, the only one (Sir John A. Macdonald) being ill, charged by the Federal Government to negotiate with the Delegates, wrote them on the 23rd of May.

In this letter the Honorable the Minister of Militia, dealt with all the topics brought forward by the Revd. Mr. Ritchot in his letter of the 18th of the same month.

The following passage contains the reply given to the paragraph quoted above, and by which Mr. Ritchot recalled the promise made to the Delegates by Sir John A. Macdonald and Sir George Cartier relative to the amnesty.

“ TO MESSRS. RITCHOT AND SCOTT :—

“ I wish to draw your attention to the interview you have had with His Excellency, on the 19th inst., in my presence, and in which it pleases His Excellency to express that the liberal policy which the Government intend to pursue, with regard to the persons in whom you are interested, is correct, and the one that ought to be adopted.

“ I have the honor, to be,

“ Gentlemen,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ (Signed),

GEORGE E. CARTIER,

“ Minister of Militia and Defence.

“ P.S.—You may at any time use this in the way you may think proper in all explanations you may have to give concerning the object for which you have been sent as delegates towards the Government of Canada.

“ (S.), G. E. C.”

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Men versed in political affairs will easily understand why Sir George E. Cartier is not more explicit. What he says, suffices, however, owing to circumstances to prove, that in reality, the Canadian Ministers had pledged themselves, otherwise Sir George E. Cartier would have been bound in honor and justice to resent the assertion made by the Revd. Mr. Ritchot when affirming that Sir George E. Cartier and his honorable colleagues had made a promise of amnesty. And the honorable the Minister of Militia would not have taken the trouble to accompany the delegates to the Governor General, in order that “it might please His Excellency to express that the liberal policy which the Government intended to pursue..... was correct and the one that ought to be adopted.”

I am convinced that every sensible man, not influenced by prejudice or interest, after having read the above, will rest satisfied that undoubtedly the amnesty had been promised by the accredited agents of the Canadian Government, and even by its own members.

I respectfully pray the reader to bear in mind that I strictly abide by my determination not to violate any secret or private communication or to reveal any letter or conversation of a confidential or personal nature. I should betray the reliance placed in my discretion. Bound in honor to be silent on many things, I shall certainly not forfeit such a duty by adding that I could not possibly deal on the question of amnesty, for four years, without having something beyond what I have stated. What I have beyond only serves to strengthen my convictions, and to justify, and even necessitate the assertion made by me, that amnesty has been promised by the Federal Authorities.

If necessary, with their permission, I could name twenty reliable persons who could give evidence that the same promise had been made to themselves as to me.

III. Has the Federal Government done anything in behalf the amnesty? An answer to this question has already been given, in replying to the two previous. I will add that the Government of the Dominion has asked in such a way that it is but reasonable to draw the conclusion that, in fact, an amnesty has really been granted to all those who have taken any part whatsoever in the difficulties of the North West.

In the first place the Government has continued its favors and salaries to those of its agents that had been the most reprehensible and who most directly caused the misfortunes we have to deplore.

On the other hand, the same Government, when indemnifying those who had suffered losses, has not overlooked all those guilty. Pretty round sums have been given to certain individuals, surely not too free from all responsibility and participation in our difficulties, notwithstanding their so-called loyalty.

To complete this proof of fact, relative to the grant of amnesty but one thing more was required; it was for the Federal Government to treat and negotiate officially with the insurgents and their leaders, who had become the officials of the Provisional Government. This is precisely what has been done to the satisfaction of the interested parties.

A delegation was repeatedly asked for by the Canadian authorities, with a promise that they would be kindly received, their suggestions fully considered and their expenses defrayed by the Canadian Exchequer.

The delegates were chosen by the President of the Provisional Government; accredited and instructed by him, as it appears in the communications of the Secretary of State, Thomas Bunn. It was solely in virtue of the powers officially conferred on them that the delegates went to Ottawa and were received in that capacity.

Other individuals who had come purposely from the Northwest, as the true representatives of the people of the Red River, and whose zeal and "loyalty" were well known did not receive the desired attention; while, on the contrary, the delegates, even the two termed "rebels," brought before the Court of Justice, vilified both by the press and tribune, were the only delegates recognized, named and treated as such; the only ones whose departure from Red River and arrival at Ottawa attracted the attention of the authorities. Why is such a distinction made? Because Messrs. Ritchot, Black and Scott, were alone in possession of credentials. The same cre-



dentials having been given to the delegates by the Provisional Government, they were its true agents. Treating, negotiating and coming to an understanding with them was, indeed, treating, negotiating and coming to an understanding with Provisional Government.

That consequence was naturally noticed as well by the opponents of the Government as by the friends of the Red River people.

All those acquainted with the matter are well aware that the opinion expressed here is not a new one, nor particular to me. Men who should know better think that they can repudiate the logical result of such negotiations by saying ingeniously "Those delegates were the delegates of the North West." It ought not to be necessary to refute such a futile objection. Men cannot represent a country without being sent by some one, and they cannot represent it officially, in political affairs, without being sent by those in power in the country. Well, it is undeniable that the Provisional Government was in power when the "Delegates of the North West" left Red River, that the sending of the Delegation was an exercise of the same power. Therefore their title "Delegates of the North West" does not change the nature nor the scope of their Delegation. When gentlemen from British Columbia went to Ottawa to negotiate the conditions of union of their Colony with Canada, they were properly termed "Delegates of British Columbia," but such title did not prevent the necessity of their having officially received their delegation, nor of their shewing the Government of Ottawa the Order in Council of their own Government as credentials, as well as the list of conditions (Bill of Rights) on which British Columbia would consent to join in the Canadian Confederation. So that while negotiating with these gentlemen the Canadian Government really negotiated with the authorities recognized in British Columbia, without considering in the least whether the choice of the delegates was popular or not.

Changing the names, the circumstances are identical relative to the "delegates of the Northwest." The Government of the Dominion really negotiated with the Provisional Government without having to examine what degree of popularity the delegates enjoyed, either in their own country or at Ottawa, or if their choice had been approved of in a public meeting.

The delegates were not only received, but they treated lengthily and freely, making use of the telegraph from time to time to report to the Secretary of the Provisional Government the progress and success of their negotiations. More than that, although the instructions given to the delegates required of them to obtain a full and complete amnesty, their "negotiations closed satisfactorily" for them, as well as for the Federal authorities.

Still more, it was agreed upon that the Provisional Government, that had sent the delegates, would *continue to remain in power and exercise its authority until the arrival, in the Province of Manitoba, of the Lieutenant Governor appointed by Canada.*

All was considered as definitely settled; the Government of Her Majesty was informed in that sense, and expressed its satisfaction at the same. It is impossible to imagine anything capable of proving more clearly that the difficulties of the Red River had, at least "a peaceable and satisfactory solution," not only for the Canadian Government, that had received from the British Cabinet the order "to exhaust all means of conciliation" but



also for the insurgents that had resorted to arms, merely to obtain the privileges enjoyed by all British subjects in the rest of the Confederation. The negotiations while securing such privileges, necessarily guaranteed the lives and liberty of those who had claimed them.

Negotiations are not entered upon with people, on the agreement with them, that they will be hanged afterwards. A Government that has self-respect will never prepare such a trap for those to whom it desired to "inspire confidence" and bring "peaceably" under its jurisdiction. It may even be said that the leaders had the best right to the consequences which mere common sense necessarily draws from the very fact of a satisfactory solution. The difficulties of the Red River from October, 1869, until September, 1870, form a political *ensemble* that cannot be taken into separate and independent parts. Having given a peaceable solution to the difficulties, it was given entirely, on all points and for all those concerned in them. The parties that occupied lower Fort Garry ought to be pardoned as well as those that occupied upper Fort Garry. The same pardon ought to be given to the parties concerned in the death of one man as to those who caused the death of another. "Irregularities," and more than that, have existed on all sides, but friendly arrangements having been entered upon and "closed satisfactorily," the whole should be buried in oblivion as provided by such settlement. It is impossible to doubt that the negotiations spoken of would be unqualifiable and incomprehensible if not connected with, or justified by the amnesty it necessarily implies.

Let any one remember the debates that took place in the Commons of Canada during the passing of the Act of Manitoba, and on every occasion in which the Northwest was concerned, and he will be easily satisfied that the Canadian Government felt that its intercourse with the insurgents implied the grant of amnesty, notwithstanding all that has been said against it in the same House.

All the impulse of political dissensions or sympathies, is necessarily powerless against the irresistible logic of facts that necessitate cool and impartial reasoning.

Should all this not be sufficient, I shall ask : What has the Canadian Government does during four years, to prove, by its actions, that an amnesty had not been granted ? Though its best friends regret its omissions on the subject, nevertheless, there is nothing in its actions tending to shew that the granting of an amnesty was not an accomplished fact. The strongest and most unjust pressure has been used to force the authorities to take some steps against the leaders of the ex-Provisional Government, interpellations have been made in the House to provoke the denial of an amnesty ; all has been useless.

The Canadian Government persuaded, on the one hand, that the difficulties had been occasioned by its acts and those of its officials ; and on the other, satisfied that the amnesty had been promised through its accredited agency, remained consistent with itself and refused to repudiate the consequences of its policy. The Canadian Government, I say, at least through those who were in power at the time of the troubles, has done nothing to destroy the impression given, viz. : " That the amnesty would undoubtedly be granted ; still more, that the said amnesty would reach Manitoba before

the arrival of the Lieutenant Governor of the Province, and that while awaiting its publication, he, the Governor General would give order that no annoyance would result to any one of those implicated in the troubles of 1869 and 1870.

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### III

## The Provincial Authorities and the Amnesty.

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What I have said relative to the Imperial and Federal authorities should suffice to indicate the action of those of Manitoba concerning the subject I am treating of. I shall, however, examine whether our Provincial authorities had any obligations in that respect, and take a rapid glance over the manner in which such obligations have been fulfilled.

I. Should the question of Amnesty attract the attention of those who govern and administer affairs in Manitoba ?

To this I will again answer, without hesitation, yes ! Those in power in Manitoba could not, or cannot, lose sight of the amnesty. The Provincial authorities, in their limits of their respective attributes, are the legal guardians, not only of the general laws of the Federal Union, but they are, moreover, under the strict obligation of safe-guarding the special conditions, on which the Province they administer became an integral part of the Dominion of Canada. The Provincial policy, at least in this matter, should necessarily reflect the Federal policy, the latter being nothing but the echo of the imperial one.

I have proved that the Government of Her Majesty had imposed certain conditions before consenting to the union of the Northwest with Canada. Canada had adopted them, and, in order to avoid all misunderstanding, a delegation had been asked for and officially received. The delegates had negotiated and come to an agreement as to the stipulations required and accepted both at Ottawa and Red River. Such agreement and stipulations are the basis on which rests the union of our Province with the Dominion. The same negotiations, ordered by the Imperial Government, received its sanction. The Federal authorities that conducted and closed those negotiations, took thereby the engagement to respect them, and to cause them to be respected. It is then evident that such settlement binds in the strictest manner all those in power in Manitoba, their very power being a mere result of the same settlement.

Without the agreement come to at Ottawa, in April and May, 1870, there would not be on earth a spot of land, called the "Province of Manitoba ;" there would not be in our midst an Executive Council whose members are termed "the Ministers of State for Manitoba ;" such institutions as the "Legislative Council" and "Legislative Assembly," of Manitoba, would be yet unheard of. Outside of the instructions given to the delegates

by the Provisional Government, no one ever thought, for the time, of the mode of administration then proposed and accepted, and by which we are now governed. The three branches of our Legislature are therefore the result of the above mentioned negotiations. Therefore, the civil powers our Province now enjoys, owe their existence to the arrangement concluded between the Government of the Dominion and the delegates of the North West, sent and directed by the Provisional Government.

Such arrangements, not only as a whole, but even in their details ought to be held as sacred, and should be known and safeguarded by all and every one of those who possess any jurisdiction in the Province of Manitoba.

The appointment of our officials being the result of the conventions agreed to, they could not and have not any promise to make relative to amnesty. Their sole duty in this line is to ascertain and guard what has been done by superior authorities. I have proved that the task is easy, at least, as far as the acquiring the knowledge of it is concerned.

The political difficulties of the Red River having been settled, previous to the existence of the Province of Manitoba, cannot be brought under the control of the actual authorities of the same Province, that should faithfully and constantly follow the path prepared both by the Government of Her Majesty and that of the Dominion.

I cannot expect that what I write here will be accepted by men blinded by prejudice, but it will surely be admitted by all who will view the matter impartially, that together with the act of Manitoba, certain agreements were passed, signed, and explained to the delegates by the representatives of the Government of Ottawa. Such were the conditions of our union with the Dominion, but such conditions, I repeat, should be studied and known by our local authorities, not only as a whole, but in their minutest details. No one has a right to command without being certain that there is an obligation to obey; and it is impossible to guide with security in an unknown path. An impartial judgment cannot be rendered without the knowledge of the privileges and immunities to which those judged have a sure and legitimate right. The overlooking or forgetting of these privileges can easily entail the most deplorable results. Even while invoking duty and justice the most imperative duties may be neglected and the grossest injustice committed. In order to avert such a misfortune which, after all, is not chimerical, I again repeat that the question of amnesty should attract the attention of those who govern and administer the affairs in Manitoba.

II. During the debates on the Bill of Manitoba, a speech delivered in the Commons of Ottawa inspired in the Government the idea that the orator might be the man of its choice, the one to whom they could confide the important and delicate task of continuing in Manitoba, the work of moderation and conciliation begun at Ottawa and that had been suggested and entirely sanctioned by England. The Honorable Adams George Archibald was chosen as first Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba. I am not aware of the instructions given to the new Governor; but it is obvious to every one capable of reflection, that they were such as to determine him to maintain the attitude taken by the Imperial and Federal authorities. Any other policy, any other line of conduct, after the negotiations and the passage of the Act of Manitoba would have been so inconsistent (not to say so crim-

inal) that a feeling of justice and self-respect would have forced the Honorable Mr. Archibald to repudiate it. I therefore consider as certain that the new Lieutenant-Governor received orders to leave nothing undone to restore confidence towards the Canadian Government, and good intelligence among the people. Useless to say that such was not possible except by endeavoring to calm excitement, instead of provoking it, or in other words, by forgetting the past, and applying the natural consequences of amnesty. This policy was adopted by the authorities of Manitoba.

A proclamation was issued inviting all parties to reassume their usual occupations, with promise of equal protection of all and every one. A member of His Honor's Cabinet, the one representing the French population, went purposely through different French parishes to explain the said proclamation in the widest and most natural sense, assuring the people that the new Lieutenant-Governor was perfectly acquainted with the promises made at Ottawa, and that none of those promises would be overlooked, consequently that the promise of amnesty would be respected.

Petitions pressing the arrest of this one and that one, calling for vengeance on this and that; petitions drew up in the most violent style were presented to His Honor. The lack of respect and courtesy went so far as to embitter the very act of welcoming the representative of superior authority by pouring hatred and revenge over the addresses presented.

The Governor feeling that his position required noble and independent freedom, constantly replied to all in the same tone of moderation, urging them to forget the past and to live in peace and harmony in the future. Always the amnesty in practice.

True, Mr. Archibald was vilified on that account, but the eminent gentleman had every reason to overlook unjust fruits of hatred and ambition. The answers given by him to the above mentioned petitions and addresses met approval precisely on account of the spirit of moderation that had inspired them, and he received congratulations from high quarters.

A few weeks after the installation of the Lieutenant-Governor, it was published in a paper of Winnipeg, that warrants had been issued by His Honor for the arrest of the leaders of the ex-Provisional Government. This news caused uneasiness even in England, whence a telegram was sent to ascertain the fact, and satisfaction was expressed when its denial proved that the Lieutenant-Governor had not altered the intended policy which was, I regret, the merely practical consequences of the promise and grant of an amnesty.

Magistrates were chosen, and, to the great scandal of certain "loyalists," "rebels" received the commission of trust. Recriminations were heard and even threats were loudly made, but all to no avail. The path was made, duty necessitated it being followed, and the Government constantly perceived it, overcoming all obstacles thrown in the way by the invocation of past troubles.

Honorable appointments were made, and a seat in the Legislative Council was given to the Vice-President of the ex-Provisional Government, the same gentleman that had been arrested and incarcerated at Fort Garry, for a few hours, on the arrival of the troops.

Without having any positive information on the following, I have all



reason to believe (and it is the opinion of almost every man) that steps were taken to prevent or paralyze any attempt made to arrest or prosecute any of those who had taken a part in the past difficulties. The officers of the Crown in Manitoba could not have acted as they did, had they not been convinced that the amnesty had been granted, and that the proclamation of Her Majesty had, in fact, deprived our Courts of all jurisdiction relative to our political difficulties and those connected with them.

During the first session of the first Parliament of Manitoba, a motion tending barely to provoke an investigation of the said political difficulties, including the death of Scott, was brought before the House, but was negatived by an amendment supported by a large majority of the House, and even by the member who had seconded the original motion.

In this circumstance, as in many others, the House proved by its vote that it believed in the amnesty. Speeches of the members of the Cabinet proved clearly that such was their conviction and that they defended it.

During the second session of the same Parliament, the three branches of the Legislature expressed the same opinion in a still more positive and unanimous manner.

It is then of public notoriety that the whole conduct of the Government of Manitoba from its outset, denotes a belief in amnesty. It is also clear that it was much more difficult at the outset than it has been since, to act in accordance with that belief. So much so, that the policy of the Government did not prevent murmurings, threats and even acts of violence on the part of those not moved by that spirit of conciliation. French Half-breeds were from time to time, brutally assailed, and one of them was cowardly assassinated a few days after the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor. The 'Metis' leaders of the ex-Provisional Government, were more than any one else, exposed to the ill-will and vengeance of those who did not even take trouble to dissemble their feelings.

The Government discountenanced, as much as possible, such proceedings. It was, however, very easy for outsiders to believe that the 'Metis' thus vexed would eagerly receive and join with men coming under the pretext of protecting them. Such, however, was not the case. The 'Metis' could not but feel and regret the unfair proceedings to which they were submitted, but, in the meantime, they knew that if the Government was powerless to give them more protection, at least, it was not in connivance with the enemies they had in the Province; and the 'Metis' were far from countenancing their pretended friends from abroad, as I shall prove, and the proof is such that by itself, it would in honor necessitate the grant of an amnesty, even if there had never been a question of it before.

Through an unexplainable blindness Fenians undertook the conquest of the Province of Manitoba. This criminal undertaking becomes perfectly ridiculous when the number engaged in it is known. Before it was possible to ascertain the whole truth, the most alarming rumors spread through the Province. "An army! Armies were to invade the whole country! The entire population of the Province could not sustain the first shock of the numerous battalions under the command of experienced officers, furnished with arms and ammunition for a regular campaign." It is easy to laugh

now at such nonsense ; but it must be owned that very few laughed, at the beginning of October, 1871. There was sufficient excitement at the time to justify the apprehensions of the Government and people of Manitoba.

The manner in which the “ Metis ” had been treated in Winnipeg caused some mistrust as to their willingness to come forward in the conflict which seemed imminent. It was even dreaded that they would be inclined to join with the invaders, and, in reality, this was what the latter expected, although their expectation was entirely groundless.

There was then but one cry in Winnipeg : “ Let Riel come forward now ; let him show his loyalty ; let the Metis take arms and we shall forget the past.”

These last words, which express the policy of the Government, were in time of danger, used by the enemies of the people, they had hitherto so sovereignly despised, and no doubt, they would have found their effect, had the fear that dictated them not been so suddenly dispelled.

The fears however ungrounded were not less real, and it was the duty of the authorities to ensure, by all the means in their power, the integrity of the empire, threatened in the small and weak Province of Manitoba. Nothing less than the unanimous co-operation of all the citizens seemed necessary to repel the enemy.

I give this explanation for the better understanding, with regard to the amnesty, of the bearing of the following documents to which I respectfully call the attention of every Canadian having at heart the honor of his country and the honor of those who govern it :—

“ GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
OCTOBER 5TH, 1871.

“ REVEREND SIR,—Your note has just reached me. You speak of the difficulties which might impede any action of Mr. Riel in coming forward to use his influence with his fellow-citizens to rally to the support of the Province in the present emergency.

“ Should Mr. Riel come forward, as suggested, he needs be under no apprehension that his liberty shall be interfered with in any way, to use your own language ‘ pour la circonstance actuelle.’ It is hardly necessary for me to add that the co-operation of the French half breeds and their leaders in the support of the Crown, under present circumstances will be very welcome and cannot be looked upon otherwise than as entitling them to most favorable consideration.

“ Let me add that in giving you this assurance with promptitude, I feel myself entitled to be met in the same spirit.

“ The sooner the French half-breeds assume the attitude in question, the more graceful will be their action, and the more favorable their influence.

“ I have the honor to be,  
“ Rev. sir, yours truly,

“ (Signed),

A. G. ARCHIBALD,  
“ Lieut. Governor.”

Rév. Père Ritchot,  
St. Norbert.

Every one will understand the meaning of the above letter that I copy from the original. I shall nevertheless add a few explanations that are almost a mere repetition of the document itself. The "action of Mr. Riel" is considered necessary and has been asked for, not only by proclamation addressed to the population at large, but, moreover, in private conversation with the Rev. J. N. Ritchot. This gentleman "indicates the difficulties which might impede any action of Mr. Riel in coming forward to use his influence with his fellow-citizens to rally to the support of the Crown." The Governor replied, "Should Mr. Riel come forward as suggested, he need be under no apprehension that his liberty shall be interfered with in any way." The intermedium between the Governor and Mr. Riel alluding to nothing more than momentary protection. His Excellency adds as if ironically, "To use your own language, 'pour la circonstance actuelle.'" But the depository of authority in Manitoba, feeling all the impropriety of such a restriction continues: "It is hardly necessary for me to add that the co-operation of the French half breeds and *their leaders in the support of the Crown* under present circumstances will be very welcome and cannot be looked upon otherwise than as *entitling them* to most favorable consideration.

The letter was written at Fort Garry on the 5th of October, and sent to Rev. Mr. Ritchot, at St. Norbert, then communicated to Mr. Riel, called purposely from St. Vital.

The latter gentleman visited the parishes inhabited by French Half-breeds, and during the night of the 7th, wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor a letter that I have never seen, but was replied to as follows:—

"GOVERNMENT HOUSE, FORT GARRY,

"JANUARY, 8TH OCT., 1871.

"GENTLEMEN,—I have it in command from His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, to acknowledge receipt of your note of this morning, assuring His Excellency of the hearty response of the 'Metis' to the appeal made to them in His Excellency's Proclamation.

"You may say to the people on whose behalf you write, that His Excellency is much gratified to receive the assurances which he anticipated in his communication with the Rév. Père Ritchot, and which your letter conveys, and that he will take the earliest opportunity to transmit to His Excellency the Governor General, the evidence of the loyalty and good faith of the 'Metis' of Manitoba.

"His Excellency will be pleased to be furnished as soon as possible, with a nominal list of the persons in each parish, who desire to enrol for active service in the present emergency.

"His Excellency will rely upon their readiness to come forward the moment they receive notice.

"I have the honor to be,

"Gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

"(Signed),

WM. O. BUCHANAN,

"Acting Private Secretary."

To Messrs. L. Riel, A. D. Lépine, Pierre Parenteau.

As may be seen it is the Governor that has communicated "officially with Messrs. Riel, Lépine and Parenteau," acknowledging receipt of a "note" in which these gentlemen "assure His Excellency of the hearty response of the 'Métis' to the appeal made to them, authorizing them to say to the people that His Excellency is much gratified to receive the assurances contained in their letter promising in return that he will take the earliest opportunity to transmit to the Governor General the evidence of the loyalty of the 'Métis' of Manitoba."

The Lieutenant-Governor goes farther, and expresses the desire to be furnished with a nominal list of the persons who desire to *enrol for active service*."

All this not being a matter of form, but a positive reality, Messrs. Riel, Lépine and Parenteau, called to arms the men they had recruited among their fellow-citizens, and in the afternoon of the same 8th October, the Lieutenant-Governor inspected a *corps d'élite* under the command of Mr. Riel.

The next day fifty mounted "Métis" were sent to a southeastern point of the Province, where it was reported that the Fenians had mustered their brigades, and it was only on the return of the *éclaireurs* that all fears were dispelled.

A second proclamation by the Lieutenant-Governor furnished the official and *diplomatic* report of the Fenian *fiasco*.

I quote the following extract :—

#### TO THE PEOPLE OF THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA.

"In the name of the Queen, I thank you, one and all, for the promptitude and spirit with which you have rushed to the defense of the country when called upon by Her Majesty's proclamation..... I had the best reason to know that the plan of the marauders was based on the belief that there were divisions in your ranks which would drive a part of the population into their arms. One of the leaders of the gang assured his companions thereof: — 'The events of the past few days have repelled the slander. At this moment our whole population has assumed an attitude which effords no encouragement to these dastardly marauders..... The reports of the front on Thursday left no doubt that the raid was to be commenced at once, and next day orders were given to advance a body of troops towards the frontier.

"Major Irvine detailed, with that view, the bulk of the service companies of the Fort, two of these organized in Winnipeg, under Captains Mulaly and Kennedy, and a company of Canadians and half-breed French, under Captain DePlainval..... Meanwhile the French parishes were completing the arrangements which I had been assured were in contemplation.

"On the afternoon of the 8th inst..... a body of French half-breeds were assembled on the east bank of Red River, and wished to be permitted to assure me, personally, of their loyalty, and to offer their services as soldiers. I went over immediatly, in company with Captain McDonald, the commander of Fort Garry in Major Irvine's absence. I found assembled on



the bank 200 able-bodied French Metis. Of these 50 were mounted, and a considerable part of the whole body had fire arms.

.....“ They assured me they had rallied to the support of the Crown, and were prepared to do their duty as loyal subjects in repelling any raid that might, now or hereafter, be made on the country.

“ I thanked the people very cordially for the assurances given in their name, and told them I should take care to make the demonstration of their feeling known to His Excellency the Governor General.

“ If among these people there were, and I believe there were, some persons whose exceptional position might have led O'Donoghue to look for their support, it only adds to the value of the demonstration, and removes the last hope of the miscreants who have invaded your soil, that they would receive sympathy of aid from any class of the population.

“ Rest assured I shall watch over your safety. Should danger come, you will be applied to again, and you will respond like men of courage—of loyalty—of patriotism.

“ The Queen relies upon the fidelity of her people of the Province, of every origin.

“ (Signed),

ADAMS G. ARCHIBALD,

“ Lieutenant-Governor.”

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If fables have their moral, surely realities should have theirs; and the moral or teaching of what preceded, cannot escape notice. What encouragement would there be in coming forward to rally to the defence of the Crown “if the consideration it entitles to,” “is to be found in perpetual banishment or confinement in a dungeon.”

I do not hesitate to say that the official appeal made to the “Metis” leaders to make, of their bodies and their lives, a rampart for the public protection; the acceptance of their military services, the inspection by the civil and military authorities of the troops under their command, all this constitutes such an obligation to grant an amnesty [if required] that it would be difficult to qualify the conduct of a Government that would defer to accomplish such a duty. Honor is such a characteristic of the races that inhabit the Canadian soil, that its people cannot repudiate the dictating of such a noble sentiment.

Please do not venture to bring forth the objection that the Lieutenant-Governor promised protection merely “*pour la circonstance actuelle!*” When a person in imminent danger calls for help and defence, promising protection and liberty “in actual circumstance,” it cannot be meant that, once the danger over, he will hang, or allow his people to hang those of whom he had implored assistance.

It will perhaps be said that the Honorable Archibald could engage only his personal responsibility. I would, for my part, rather be guided by the maxim “In time of distress the first present has the authority of the first absent.” In danger of shipwreck, in the absence of the Captain, the



second, the Lieutenant on board, has not only power to order manœuvres or even to plunge into the deep, as the case may require, but, more than that, he has a right to encourage every one to do their duty nobly by promise of reward ; and such promise is binding on the superior officers.

Should a brigade be taken by surprise in the absence of the General and Colonel, it belongs to the first officer in duty to provide for the defence and, when in the impossibility to resort to headquarters, he succeeds in saving those under his command, it is quite sure that no one will blame the promptness of his action ; and should any one, at his request, have come to his help, superior officers would not allow them to be rewarded by ill-treatment.

A Province of the Confederation is attacked by marauders, the Lieutenant-Governor, in the impossibility of having recourse to the Governor-General, and still less to the Imperial authorities, takes all the steps that prudence and common sense dictates, succeeds perfectly in averting the misfortunes that nothing but prompt action can repel, will any one say that he has done wrong ? Will the Federal or Imperial authorities repudiate the obligation contracted in honor by their Lieutenant ? Is it possible to suspect hesitation in the exercise of the "Royal Prerogative of Mercy," in favor of those who, without hesitation, offered their lives to rally to the support of the Crown ?

Children acting the part of great men, would understand all this, and would not fail to detect the requirements of the role.

If it is now asked how it happened that after all that had occurred, a new proclamation of amnesty has not been issued. I will reply that the thing is quite clear and natural ; it is because the amnesty had been already granted as I have proved.

The silence kept by the different authorities after the events in Manitoba, in 1871, shows clearly that they consider as sufficient the proclamation of amnesty already issued.

In his letter to Messrs. Riel, Lépine and Parenteau, as well as in his Proclamation to the people of Manitoba, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province promised to "transmit to His Excellency the Governor General, the evidence of the loyalty of the "Métis" and their leaders, in a demonstration entitling them to the most favorable consideration." The Honorable Mr. Archibald did certainly not omit to fulfil this solemn engagement. On the other hand, Lord Lisgar cannot have placed in his most secret drawer, the report of such "evidence of loyalty and good faith." So the whole was necessarily made known in England, and the clemency and generosity of our Beloved Sovereign are such, that she should not have refused to accept the natural consequences of the act of her representative.

Had a renewed declaration of amnesty been necessary, the Honorable Mr. Archibald would have solicited it, at least, when he arrived at Ottawa, and had he failed to have his demand endorsed in the Capital of the Dominion, having shortly after gone to England, he would have placed his request at the foot of the Throne, and I do not hesitate to say that he was bound in honor to go thus far. Had all such endeavors been vain, his duty

then, was to disengage his responsibility by making known the inutility of his efforts.

But nothing of the kind was required, as the amnesty had been agreed to, long ere then. So the superior authorities remained silent, and the Government of Manitoba quietly continued to act as before. Why has a change since taken place? In the month of December, 1872, a maladroit and unjust word fell from so high a quarter that its echo sounded louder than was expected when it was pronounced. A few months later, the generous statesman that had taken the most active part in the settlement of Red River difficulties had breathed his last. The enemies of the "Métis" thought that the assurances given were entombed with him, who, more than any other, had to protect them. The printed account of the last honors paid to the remains of Sir George E. Cartier had hardly reached Manitoba, when a new policy was inaugurated in the Province: On the 1st July, 1873, a step was taken, that would have been merely ridiculous had it not been for some parties, the occasion of a deplorable attitude towards an inoffensive population. The organs of violence in Winnipeg afflicted with "a certain business look," easily attributing to others their own feelings, loudly published with incendiary comments: "The War of Races revived." Advantage was taken of the fact of a drunken man at *House's Tavern* to rekindle hatred, and a spirit of revenge that soon had its effect.

The election of Sir George E. Cartier had occasioned disappointment and spite. Vengeance was decided upon; and during the anniversary week of the election, warrants were issued for the arrest of Messrs. Riel and Lépine who had so largely contributed to the same election.

The first stone is not always cast by those without sin. So it happened in this case. The suit was instituted by one of the Canadian employees, who, according to the appreciation of their own Government, had "joined an armed force entirely illegal," and partaken in "proceedings so reckless and extraordinary that the Governor General and Council could not disguise the weight of responsibility incurred." By one of those who, according to Earl Granville, "have certainly enhanced the responsibility of the Canadian Government."

Mr. Farmer who had *sworn* to an information, failed to support it in his *sworn* deposition; nevertheless, he was chosen as a *jurymen*, and swore to report an *impartial* presentment in a case in which he was himself *prosecutor*.

And it is in accordance with the presentment of such jurors that criminal trials are continued, that arrests are made, and that citizens have to fly to a foreign land at the risk of being declared outlaws.

The public will know later to whom we are indebted for this new case of excitement, and what has been its consequence at Ottawa. It will be an easy task to ascertain who gave the first impulse and what degree of responsibility has been assumed by violating the most solemn promises kept for three years after they had been made. Such will undoubtedly be undertaken by some one. For my part, I shall now bring to a close what I had to say on amnesty.

## CONCLUSION.

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Before concluding this work which would be already too long, were not such an important question at stake. I shall recapitulate the proofs on which my assertions are based.

The amnesty is no longer an open question that one could disregard or accept without scrutiny or attention. The question is not free since public honor is pledged both by the Imperial and Federal authorities, as well as by the Provincial.

### SEC. I.—IMPERIAL AUTHORITIES.

The Imperial Government is bound to grant an amnesty for all the reprehensible acts committed during the whole period of the Red River troubles, whatever may have been the nature of these acts or by whomsoever committed. This obligation is imperative, because :

I The British Cabinet having ascertained that Canada had given occasion to the troubles of the Red River, and enjoined to exhaust all means of conciliation, to pacify a population that had not risen against the authority of Her Majesty the Queen, nor to withdraw from her allegiance.

II. The most solemn promises have been made by the legitimate representatives of the Imperial authorities. These promises have never been revoked and have been accepted in the greatest good faith.

III. The Imperial Government has acted in a way to convince everybody that those same promises were being carried out. The British Cabinet asked for delegates, manifested great interest about them, granted them their demands and did not permit the movement of the troops until after having received the assurance that the Red River insurgents were satisfied with the arrangements. In consequence of this, the Imperial troops received but a mission of "peace and civilization."

The indiscretion of an officer of the Empire is but another reason for granting an amnesty.

### SEC. II.—FEDERAL AUTHORITIES.

The Canadian authorities are as much committed to amnesty as the Imperial authorities, because :

I. It is Canada that occasioned the troubles, and its responsibility was enhanced not only by the acts of private individuals and inferior officials, but also by the conduct of superior officers of its Government, and also of its Parliament.

II. Solemn promises have been given both *viva voce* and by writing—promises given by and in the name of Federal ministers, often repeated and never denied, at least to those to whom they have been made.

III. The conduct of the Federal Government binds them to the amnesty, since, during the troubles, and even after the death of Thomas Scott, they treated, officially with the delegation asked for by themselves. Now, this delegation was incontestably sent and accredited by the Provisional Government. This mere fact constitutes not only the obligation of granting amnesty, but even necessarily implies the acknowledgment of the amnesty granted, as Canada has admitted by taking no action against the authors of the movement.

### SEC. III.—PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES.

The amnesty cannot be an open question with the authorities of Manitoba, because :

I. So far as the conditions of federal union are concerned, the Provincial Government should necessarily respect the arrangements made and reflect the policy to which superior authorities have pledged themselves. The Manitoba Government owing its existence to the very arrangements made with the delegates of the Provisional Government had no promises to make with the past, and could be, but the echo of those made, and secure the fulfilment of all the obligations contracted.

II. The conduct of the Provincial authorities from the very beginning of its administration, evidently shows that they believe themselves under the obligation to draw the practical consequence of the grant of amnesty.

Finally, I have given the last proof in support of my argument, and it is not the least, since it is the one, that by its nature, obliges all the orders of the constitutional hierarchy, which governs the country, and which, by itself alone, makes the amnesty a debt of honor for all who can co-operate to its granting. This proof is, the call to arms, in time of danger, that was made individually to the very men that are pretended to have no right to the benefit of an amnesty ; the official correspondence of the authorities with these same men, the acceptance of their military services, and the inspection of the force under their command.

The reader who will take the trouble to pursue my work, will find numerous and unexceptionable documents in support of the different assertions I have made.

I add to my conclusion the amnesty which has been proved, not an open question, is not even an indifferent one. For four years, the mere mention of it is a cause of excitement, not only in Manitoba but throughout the Dominion. It has been too much for one Administration, and can only embarrass its successors. Two general elections have been conducted partly with regard to this topic. Many complications might have been avoided if, as it had been agreed upon, a positive and unquestionable declaration of amnesty had been proclaimed at the time of the transfer of the country. Undoubtedly recrimination would have been heard ; but

with less bitterness, violence, and danger than now, it has been for four years served by a portion of the Canadian press to their readers. The word of our Sovereign, beloved and revered by all her subjects, would have been received with respect and submission. Such has not been the case. Federal Ministers after having pledged themselves shrank before agitation and clamour, abandoning the high station in which duty invited them to remain. They failed in presence of a danger, perhaps, only imaginary, that threatened their official existence, and I am sorry to say feeling their weakness, they feared to speak.

Their political opponents had watched them closely enough to understand the position. They easily detected the weak point and directed their battery so much the more dangerous that it played under the shelter of laudable pretences.

The death of a man became a party question. The corpse of the unfortunate was treated and spoken of so repeatedly that it brought excitement to a kind of frenzy. The public mind was thus over excited by a portion of the Press on both sides, each thinking to serve the interests of its own party.

The things went so far during the contest for the general elections in 1872, that the Right Hon. the Premier, so far forgot himself as to deliver speeches that ought to cause him regret, especially if he takes the trouble to compare them with others of his words and his general mode of acting. Everything of nature to excite violence and implacable hatred has been said and written. Strangers must entertain a queer idea of the manner in which political contests are followed in Canada. I know that a great many Canadians, true patriots of all origins, deplore such a practice which can only be prejudicial to our beloved and common country. It seems to me as well as to many others, that it is more than time to put an end to all this : the weakness of some, the violence of others has prevented calmness. All parties are nevertheless equally bound by public honor. The late Government had promised the amnesty, so it was obliged to make good its obligations ; the Government of the day, although the opposition of the time has inherited the duty of protecting a national engagement.

Once more I urge, let us get rid of this irritating question. To violent men and to persons blinded by prejudice, I will say " What is your aim ? "

Is your hatred not yet sufficiently and loudly expressed to remain at length silent ? Is not your revenge long enough exercised to be now satisfied ? What more do you want ? Blood ! Alas ! Too much has been already shed ! What do you wish for ? Lives ? Five have been already sacrificed ! If the death of a friend (that pains myself deeply) irritates you, let the remembrance of the death of four others appease you, or rather may it remove from your mind, the cruel idea of keeping this Province in trouble any longer. Allow me to ask you, friends, under what law do you live ? Christians do not forget the precept of charity that commands the pardon of offenders !

You come to this country with the pretence of civilizing it ; you call the old settlers, you so blindly despise, semi-barbarians and an uncultivated race. Allow me to make known a lesson given by natives of the country a few days after the installation of the Canadian authorities in Manitoba. A



murder was committed at Winnipeg ; it belonged to me to console the afflicted mother of the victim ! The widow in her bereavement, the relatives in this most cruel calamity ! My tears were mingled with those of the desolate, but christian family ! I was encouraging to resignation and forgiveness, when amid the sobs, I distinguished the following words : “ Monsieur, we willingly pardon ! while praying for the one that is no more, we will also pray for those who have killed him ! May God forgive them ! May he have mercy on the victim, and spare his murderers ! We offer the sacrifice of our feelings that peace may be restored to our unfortunate country, and that our relative may be the last victim ! ”

The family so deeply afflicted declined any pursuit against those known as having contributed to the assassination, and went so far as to request that nothing would be done against them.

Oh ! You who seem to live but to hate ; you who have so unjustly reviled the poor “ Métis ” of the North West, be as savage and barbarous as those I have just mentioned, and our Canada will not be the worse of it.

To come to a final conclusion I shall take the liberty to address those in power, using a sentence of the most generous and the noblest sufferer during the troubles of Red River. I will say with my lamented friend the Honorable W. McTavish, speaking his last word as Governor of Assiniboia : Having “ formed a Government, for God’s sake restore peace and order in the settlement.”

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